

Dornan, Jennifer (2015) Controversial reform: the linguistic construction of present-day Britain in the speeches of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. MPhil(R) thesis.

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of Glasgow

Controversial Reform:

The Linguistic Construction of Present-Day Britain in the Speeches of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Glasgow for the degree of
Master of Philosophy by Research
Department of English Language, University of Glasgow
September 2013

Abstract

Controversial Reform: the Linguistic Construction of Present-Day Britain in the Speeches of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. Jennifer Dornan

This thesis analyses the linguistic construction of Britain by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in his public speeches from May 2010 to October 2012. It does so in the context of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 by focusing on three main areas of construction: the welfare system itself, the concept of “worklessness”, and the relationship between government and citizens. In chapter 3, I apply the conceptual metaphor theories set out by Lakoff (1996) to contemporary British politics to explain and examine the moral origins of arguments for austerity and the focus on welfare in particular, whilst analysing the linguistic features used to present the welfare state as “unsustainable” in its present form. In chapter 4, the argument that there exists in Britain a “culture of worklessness” is closely examined and I ask what this means, analyse the linguistic construction of this culture and the people who are alleged to live in it, ask how its existence is evidenced in the dataset, and explore external evidence for its existence and consider the impact of both the widespread acceptance of the existence of this culture and the dangers it poses both to those supposedly within and those living outside of it. In chapter 5, I return to the metaphor systems on which political ideologies are based and analyse the dataset in detail to reveal to which moral framework – and corresponding metaphor systems – Duncan Smith is most closely adhering (shown to be Lakoff’s Strict Father model). I then examine the consequences of this on the representation of the citizens living under this father figure. With consideration throughout of Jeffries’ (2010) work on the construction of oppositional meaning, Sinclair (1971) and Louw’s (1993) work on semantic prosody and utilising Simpson’s (1993) framework for transitivity analysis, I explore the assignment of agency with regard to the problems being argued to necessitate these welfare reforms. Alongside this, I look at how the linguistic features of these speeches contribute to the creation

Page | 2

of an in- and out-group and consider the impact of this. The thesis applies some contemporary theories in cognitive linguistics, evolutionary psychology, and discourse and metaphor analysis to recent political speeches which contain information crucial to understanding the changing face of British politics today.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the staff of the Department of English Language for providing such a friendly, welcoming and inspiring environment in which to carry out this research. I am especially grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Marc Alexander, for being a constant source of information, inspiration and encouragement; Dr. Catherine Emmott, for her invaluable input at all the crucial stages of this research, particularly in preparing for presenting some of my findings for the first time; Agnes Marszalek for her much needed and appreciated moral support at that time too, and for helping me gain confidence in that setting; Dr. Johanna Green for her invaluable advice and for allowing me the benefits of her own experience, and Dr. Wendy Anderson for her continued support and encouragement throughout my undergraduate degree and beyond.

This thesis would have been impossible without the financial and moral support of my mother and father, Joan and Edward Dornan and my aunt, May Hooper. It would have been equally impossible without the endless patience of all my wonderful friends, especially Andrew Watson, Rachel Buckley and Sharon Grieve who were always willing to talk through my research with me and to offer an opinion. I am forever in their debt. Finally, I would like to thank my brother and sister, David Dornan and Eleanor Canero, for their unfaltering support of and belief in me, throughout this last year and indeed our whole lives. This thesis is dedicated to them.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction.....	8
1.1 Background.....	8
1.2 The Dataset.....	9
1.3 Research Questions.....	9
Chapter 2 Frameworks and Methodology Used.....	10
2.1 Frameworks.....	10
2.1.1 Semantic Prosody.....	11
2.1.2 Transitivity Analysis.....	12
2.1.3 Constructed Equation and Opposition.....	18
2.1.4 Metaphor Theory.....	20
2.2 Methodology.....	21
Chapter 3 The Language of Reform: Why the Welfare Budget in Particular?.....	24
3.1 Background.....	24
3.2 Linguistic Strategies.....	25
3.2.1 The NATION IS A FAMILY: The Argument for Austerity Itself.....	26
3.2.2 Morality in Politics.....	30
3.2.3 The Prevalence of the NATION IS A FAMILY Metaphor.....	32

3.2.4 Spiralling Out of Control: The Welfare System as Dangerous Force.....	33
3.2.5 Inputs <u>rather than</u> Outcomes: the Construction of Dichotomous Choice.....	34
3.2.6 “Broken and Ballooning”: Intensifying Metaphors of Emergency.....	36
3.2.7 “The Emperor’s New Clothes Gambit” and the Necessity of Reform.....	39
3.2.8 The Language of Exaggeration.....	43
3.2.9 The “Spiral” Metaphor.....	44
3.3 Making Work Pay.....	46
3.4 Conclusions.....	47
Chapter 4 The “Cultural Issue”	49
4.1 Introduction and Background of “workless(ness)”	49
4.2 Methodology.....	51
4.3 Results.....	52
4.3.1 Culture/ cultural.....	52
4.3.2 Arguing for an Intergenerational Decision Not to Work: The “Salient Exemplar”	61
4.3.3 Workless/ worklessness.....	66
4.3.4 “Worklessness” as a “driver” of poverty/ disadvantage.....	68
4.3.5 Dependency.....	73

4.3.6 Transitivity of Sentences Containing “Worklessness”	76
4.3.7 Transitivity of Sentences Containing “Workless”	79
4.3.8 The Constructed Equation of “household” and “families” and the Constructed Opposition of “working” and “workless”	80
4.4 Conclusions.....	85
Chapter 5 Firm but Fair? The Government in Parental Role.....	88
5.1 The Family Model.....	88
5.1.1 The Central Metaphor MORALITY IS STRENGTH and the Role of Competition.....	91
5.2 Incentivising Work and Making it Pay: the Presence of Folk Behaviourism in the Dataset.....	94
5.3 The Frequency of Seemingly Nurturant Parent Language.....	96
5.3.1 Occurrences of key liberal terms.....	104
5.4 Support from Historical Social Reformers: the Emperor’s New Clothes Gambit Extended.....	117
5.4.1 Sir William Beveridge.....	117
5.4.2 Robert Owen.....	123
5.5 Firm but Fair: The Depiction of Fairness.....	124
5.5.1 Fairness.....	125
5.6 Citizens as Children within the Family Model.....	128
5.6.1 The Constructed Opposition of Taxpayers and Benefits Claimants.....	138
5.7 Conclusions.....	131

Chapter 6 Thesis Conclusions.....	133
Chapter 7 Future Directions.....	136
Bibliography.....	137
Locations of Online	
Sources.....	140

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The research for this thesis was undertaken in order to examine the linguistics of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions' discussion of the UK Welfare Reform Act 2012. The legislative reforms contained within this act mean that large numbers of people across the UK are seeing their incomes reduced, in some cases radically, at a time when "rising inflation and stagnant wages mean the squeeze on people on middle and low incomes is getting tighter" (Jamieson online 19.03.13). As will be explained later in the thesis, there are numerous state benefits upon which many people depend to make ends meet and these benefits, as a result of this act, are being capped or removed as the UK's welfare system is significantly reduced. An important point which will be discussed later in the thesis is that those people who depend upon these benefits are in a variety of situations, although recipients of benefits are presented in the dataset as being almost exclusively out of work. The aim of the thesis is to uncover how the picture of present-day Britain is being linguistically constructed throughout the dataset of speeches in such a way that confirms that the legislative changes contained within the Welfare Reform Act 2012 are justifiable and necessary.

1.2 The dataset

The thesis is a critical discourse analysis of a set of 32 speeches by the UK Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith, and totals 74,041 words. This cabinet minister was chosen because, as outlined on the UK government website, he “has overall responsibility for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). DWP is responsible for the administration of the state pension and working age benefits system” (Gov.uk). It was reasonable therefore, to assume that his speeches would offer the most frequent and detailed explanations of these reforms, their impact, and the reasons behind their implementation. There are 32 speeches in this dataset as, for the sake of completeness, it is comprised of every speech made by Duncan Smith from the time he came into office (May 2010) until the last day of the month in which I began work on the thesis (October 2012). Each speech has been taken exactly as it appears on the UK government website, and it is on these transcriptions that the analyses have been carried out. There are, for this reason, occasional errors in the dataset which I have not corrected and there may on occasion have been deviations from these original scripts in the actual delivery of the speeches, as the website warns. However, it is not possible to compare these transcripts with the delivery of all speeches in the dataset and it should therefore be noted that it is sufficient for the purposes of this thesis that the analyses are carried out on the original scripts as available through the website, rather than on the spoken versions.

1.3 Research Questions

The thesis asks important research questions about contemporary British political ideologies and their linguistic realisations:

1. Which political ideologies are present with regards to welfare reforms and on what conceptual metaphor systems are these ideologies based?
2. What are the advantages and dangers of widespread acceptance of these metaphor systems?
3. How are these metaphors and underlying ideologies realised through the vocabulary and syntax of these political speeches?
4. Ultimately, what is the potential for the language used in these speeches to influence what UK citizens will allow, or even encourage to happen to the welfare state?

Chapter 2

Frameworks and Methodology Used

2.1 Frameworks

A number of theoretical frameworks are employed throughout the thesis in the analysis of the data.

These are: Examining occurrences of significant words for their **semantic prosody** (regular collocation) (Sinclair 1991; Louw 1993); **transitivity analysis** (Halliday 1971; Simpson 1993), and examining the grammar and syntax of the structures containing identified significant words to reveal instances of **constructed equation and opposition** (Jeffries 2010). Lakoff's (1996) political **metaphor theory** is also used in analysing the underlying ideologies of the speeches and how these are realised through the language used.

Throughout the thesis, I have provided the number of times words or phrases deemed significant to the inquiry appear within the dataset. This is mainly for the sake of information, and to show that none have been left uncoun ted.

I give below a description of the main theories and frameworks used in the thesis and some commentary on why they were selected.

2.1.1 Semantic Prosody

Following on from Sinclair's (1991) work on semantic prosody, Louw explains that it is the "consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates" (Louw, 1993: 157). This idea is important when considering how the regular collocates of an analysed term can impact on its overall connotations, or what semantic space it tends to occupy. That is to say, the words with which a certain phrase or word regularly collocates, and their accompanying connotations, can impact the connotations or sense of that word or phrase, and how it will be received throughout the dataset. The concordance software AntConc (see below) identifies a word as being a regular collocate of the search term if it occurs alongside it with above average frequency. This is important for this thesis as some words and phrases carry very context-dependent connotations and so it is essential to note that these connotations are influenced by their frequent occurrence alongside certain other words or phrases (collocates). So, the words and phrases under examination in this thesis have been imbued with meaning by their regular collocates and this is what is termed their semantic prosody. Therefore, the semantic prosodies of words and phrases in corpora are really only identifiable by the use of corpus linguistic software such as AntConc, which relays accurate information about the frequency of occurrences of collocation.

Stewart (2010) points out that it has been repeatedly argued that it has only become possible to properly observe and to study semantic prosody with the advent of new technology – namely

computers and the software that has been designed for them – which can process large corpora. As he states:

“Adolphs and Carter (2002: 7)...state that the study of semantic prosody ‘has only become possible with the advent of large corpora and suitable software’, as does Hunston (2002: 142), who asserts that ‘semantic prosody can be observed only by looking at a large number of instances of a word or phrase, because it relies on the typical use of a word or phrase’” (Stewart 2010: 80)

This can be applied to the examination of very large corpora, as well as smaller corpora such as the corpus of speeches which forms the dataset used for this thesis.

2.1.2 Transitivity Analysis

In a move away from the traditional understanding of “transitivity” as a description of whether or not a verb takes a direct object, transitivity analysis, as it is applied in this thesis, looks at the grammar with which **processes** are expressed in a clause to discover what perspectives or points of view are being presented or concealed by the speaker. In this way, it is a much more politicized form of analysis and so has proven more popular among Critical Discourse analysts. The framework for transitivity analysis was originally formulated by M.A.K Halliday (see Halliday, 1971), who is known as the founder of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). Halliday says that there are two ways to label a linguistic unit: by class and by function. Class terms are those such as noun, verb, and adjective, while function terms are those such as subject, object and complement. Halliday names his kind of grammatical analysis “systemic functional” because it “shows that functionality is **intrinsic** to language: that is to say, the entire architecture of language is arranged along functional lines. Language is as it is because of the functions in which it has evolved in the human species.” (Halliday 2004: 31) That

is, it is about uncovering what purpose or function language serves its users. In his “Introduction to Functional Grammar” (in multiple editions; the 3rd edition from 2004 is the one used in this thesis) Halliday sets out a detailed framework for transitivity analysis in which it is explained that transitivity analysis belongs in the ideational function of language. This is itself one of three main functions of language set out by Halliday: ideational (to communicate information), textual (to signify discourse) and interpersonal (to establish and maintain social relationships). It is in this work that the important idea of “clause as message” (Halliday 1985: 64) is expounded, and where the familiar construct of “subject – verb – object” is first transferred into “participant – process – participant” which then becomes the basic construct for the analysis of clauses as processes in which each individual clause potentially represents often subtly different process types.

These processes have potentially three components which are:

1. The **process** itself (expressed by a Verb Phrase)
2. The **participants** (typically Noun Phrases)
3. The **circumstances** around the process (Adverbial and Prepositional Phrases)

By looking closely at these components, we can see more deeply into the **intended representation** of the process, which can give us much insight into the socio-political context of the utterance. Trew (1979), Simpson (1993), and Fowler (1994) have each set out their own modified models of Halliday’s transitivity analysis framework and they have each been found by others to have their own merits – for this reason, they are occasionally even used together. I prefer to use one model exclusively, for the sake of simplicity and clarity. While in the Hallidayan model there are six main process types, in Simpson’s (1993) later, more simplified model, these are compressed into four main process types: **material** processes, or processes of *doing*; **verbalization** processes, or processes of *saying*; **mental** processes, or processes of *sensing* and **relational** processes, or processes of *being* – all of which, except verbalization

processes, can be further subdivided “on the basis of finer distinctions in meaning” (Simpson, 1993: 89). Had this thesis been solely a work of transitivity analysis, the more complex Hallidayan model may have been applied as this could allow for a more in-depth analysis of the transitivity at work in these speeches. However, I instead use Simpson’s (1993) model exclusively as this was found to be highly suited to the purposes of the thesis, accounting for all major processes in the speeches while providing a clear framework by which to produce easily read analyses, and allowing the discussion of transitivity to remain concise, and within the scope of the overall thesis. On occasion the processes analysed in the thesis could potentially have called for a more complex framework of transitivity analysis – however, it was felt that this was ultimately unnecessary as the model could still reasonably be applied, and a brief explanation of the decisions taken, where necessary, in the analysis provided. For our purposes, it is necessary to note the following fundamentals of Simpson’s transitivity model in order to understand the result of the data analysis within this thesis, as summarised from Simpson (1993) pp89-92:

Material processes, or processes of doing

Material processes have two inherent participant roles associated with them: the ACTOR, an obligatory element which represents the ‘doer’ of the process expressed by the clause, and an optional GOAL which represents the person or entity affected by the process.

ACTOR	PROCESS	GOAL
Paul	pressed	the button
ACTOR	PROCESS	
The dog	yawned	

In the passive form, the ACTOR and GOAL participant roles swap positions within the clause.

Material processes can then be further subdivided, depending on how the process itself is performed. If the process is performed by an animate actor, it is referred to as an *action* process.

When the process is being performed by an inanimate actor, on the other hand, this is referred to as an *event* process. For example:

ACTOR	PROCESS
-------	---------

The door	slammed
----------	---------

Action processes may themselves be further subdivided according to the presence or absence of intention, on the part of the animate actor. Where the process is carried out deliberately by the actor, this is an *intention* process, and a *supervention* process is one that simply occurs, without any voluntary action on the part of the actor. For example:

INTENTION	
-----------	--

ACTOR	PROCESS
-------	---------

Paul	waved
------	-------

SUPERVENTION	
--------------	--

ACTOR	PROCESS
-------	---------

Paul	slipped
------	---------

While these subdivisions are useful, it must also be noted that the criteria for making them are not always easily identified. For example, it can be difficult to clearly ascertain whether a particular participant role exhibits animacy or inanimacy, or whether a process has been done intentionally or not. So these subdivisions should be regarded more as handy approximations than as strictly delineated categories.

Verbalization processes, or processes of saying

The participant roles of verbalization processes are that of SAYER (the person who is speaking) and TARGET (the person who is being spoken to). That which is being said is called the VERBIAGE. Some examples are:

SAYER	PROCESS	VERBIAGE	
She	yelled	for help	
SAYER	PROCESS	VERBIAGE	TARGET
Rory	told	our secret	to everyone
SAYER	PROCESS	TARGET	VERBIAGE
Eleanor	said	to David	that the party was fun

Mental processes, or processes of sensing

These processes are “internalised” in that they occur within the performer of the process and are therefore rather different to the other, “externalised” processes. Mental processes can be subdivided into three categories: *Perception processes* (processes of seeing and hearing etc.); *reaction processes* (processes of liking and hating etc.) and processes of *cognition* (processes of thinking and understanding).

The two participant roles associated with mental processes are that of SENSER and PHENOMENON. The senser is the conscious being that is perceiving, reacting to or thinking about something. The thing being perceived, reacted to or thought about, is what we call the phenomenon. For example:

SENDER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON
We	heard	thunder
SENDER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON
Sharon	hates	heavy metal
SENDER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON
Julia	pondered	the poem
SENDER	PROCESS	CIRCUMSTANCES
I	thought	Long and hard.

Relational processes, or processes of being

These processes signal that a relationship exists between two participants but without suggesting that one participant affects the other in any way.

Relational processes may be (a) *intensive*, expressing an 'X is a' relationship; (b) *possessive* expressing an 'X has a' relationship, or (c) *circumstantial*, expressing an 'X is at/on a' relationship.

Examples:

Intensive Joanne is sweet, Luke seems naive

Possessive Jen has a BMW, Kenny owns a pit bull

Circumstantial Rory is in the bathroom, the kids are at school

The participant roles in these processes are that of CARRIER, which always comes first, and ATTRIBUTE, which always follows the verb.

2.1.3 Constructed Equation and Opposition

Jeffries' (2010) framework for constructed equation and opposition looks at the contextual construction of oppositional meaning and is used in this thesis as it throws light on the ways in which terms or concepts which are not conventionally or obviously thought of as opposites, are in fact being represented as such through the construction of the speeches in which they appear. The idea of mutual exclusivity had long been an important aspect of my interest in the language of welfare reform. It was clear to me that those using the welfare state were being depicted as belonging to a group quite distinct from those who are in work, although I was aware that these two groups often overlap. Jeffries' framework allowed me to clearly see and to explain how this impression of mutual exclusivity is created in this dataset, by identifying structural and lexical triggers of opposition. In particular, it was found that oppositions in this dataset were often triggered by parallel structures and, somewhat unusually, the coordinating conjunction 'and'.

In Leech's 1969 work 'A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry', he outlines how effective this structural trigger of equation and opposition is in poetry:

"Every parallelism sets up a relationship of equivalence between two or more elements...Interpreting the parallelism involves appreciating some external connection between these elements. The connection is, broadly speaking, a connection either of similarity or of contrast." (Leech 1969: 67)

That this has been exploited so successfully in creative writing demonstrates the power that sentence structure has over how we will perceive a text. The above quotation from Leech sums up concisely the form of a phenomenon occurring quite frequently within this dataset but that, without the use of a framework like Jeffries', would be very difficult to illuminate: that how something is said can often be

even more influential on its audience, than what has been said. The methodology by which these triggers were identified was mainly simply reading the dataset and highlighting where such parallel structures and lexical triggers occurred. This is the main advantage of working with a relatively small corpus. It allowed me to read the entire corpus several times and to identify strategies that may have been too unexpected or subtle to allow me to identify a relevant search term. Where a particular lexical trigger was found, I was able to use the Antconc software to ensure that all instances had been checked for similar usage. Even the somewhat unusual usage of the coordinating conjunction “and”, could be double checked in this way, once it had been found to trigger opposition, in the following utterances, for example:

- “We will reform the regime so that we properly reward the providers who do best at creating sustainable jobs that help people move out of benefits and into work.” (Appendix 1: 132-134)
- “...a system that encourages people to move into work and out of benefits” (*ibid*: 622-623)

As we shall see in more detail in chapter 4, sections 4.3.8 and 4.3.5, parallel structures trigger a comparison in the minds of text-consumers, and while “and” is not a common trigger of constructed opposition, it is aided in these instances by the semantically contrastive qualities of the prepositional phrases it links. Although, as one may expect, there is a very high occurrence of the coordinating conjunction “and” in the dataset, it was possible – again thanks in part to the relatively small size of the corpus – to use AntConc to quickly display all 1906 of these and to read over them again to ensure that other instances of its usage in this way had not been overlooked.

2.1.4 Metaphor Theory

Before Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) work 'Metaphors We Live By', metaphor was thought by most to be a conscious, purely stylistic tool by which speakers or writers would deliberately present one thing by means of claiming it as another, for stylistic effect. Most importantly, it was thought to be "characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 3) and it is their demonstration that this is not in fact the case which makes metaphor theory essential to the analyses undertaken in this thesis. Lakoff and Johnson showed that, not only is metaphor far from restricted to creative writing or even to language, it permeates our cognitive functions and shapes how we conceive of the world around us.

"...metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature." (*ibid*)

It is essential to understand the importance of this discovery, when considering the occurrence of metaphor in political speeches such as those under examination in this thesis. These are not temporary, stylistic methods of conceptualising people or circumstances, such as the out-of-work or a state of joblessness. Rather, these metaphors pervade the wider discussion on these matters and will shape the ways in which those listening to the speeches continue to both discuss and to conceptualise them. Other, valuable contributions to metaphor theory have of course been made since Lakoff and Johnson published their groundbreaking work and, importantly for our purposes here, some have also applied their own developed frameworks to political speeches, revealing much about the ways in which metaphors can underlie political ideologies and everyday discussions, often without our being aware of them. One such theorist whose work was taken into consideration in the preparation of the analyses in this thesis, is Elena Semino, particularly the work in her 2008 book 'Metaphor in Discourse'. However,

the framework used in this work is not as comprehensively explicated as that of Lakoff's (1996) 'Moral Politics', which is much more focused on the underlying political ideologies of commonly heard terms in political discourse, rather than on individual instances of metaphor use by politicians, as reported in the media. Furthermore, Semino's framework, while taking into consideration the pervasive nature of metaphor in every day thought and action, it does not highlight it in the same way that Lakoff's does:

"By 'metaphor' I mean the phenomenon whereby we talk and, potentially, think about something in terms of something else." (Semino 2008: 1)

I am in agreement with Lakoff regarding this pervasiveness of metaphor in action and thought and required a framework that incorporates and reflects this. Lakoff's framework does so more strongly than others. It is, furthermore, very much this idea of underlying ideologies revealed through core, repeated metaphors that this thesis sought to pursue and it was therefore decided that the use of Lakoff's 1996 framework would be appropriate.

The decision to use Lakoff's metaphor theory was taken also for reasons of clarity and simplicity. His explanation of the underlying conceptual metaphors which drive political ideologies provides excellent insight into the context of what is uttered in these speeches and it was felt that this framework was most suited to the purposes of this analysis. Furthermore, in a similar way to Duncan Smith being targeted for scrutiny because he is the "father" of these reforms, Lakoff is arguably the "father" of modern metaphor theory and, again for the sake of simplicity and clarity in my work, I have opted for what I feel is the one most obvious – as well as appropriate – choice.

2.2 Methodology

As McEnery et al state, "the most obvious advantage of using a computer for language study is the speed of processing it affords and the ease with which it can manipulate data (e.g. searching, selecting,

sorting and formatting). Computerized corpora can be processed and manipulated rapidly at minimal cost” (2006: 6). The speed at which a corpus such as the one used in this thesis – and, indeed, much larger corpora – can be analysed using a computer is a major advantage, and this speed and convenience increases all the time with developments to specially designed linguistic software. For the purposes of the analyses in this thesis, AntConc 3.2.4w was selected for use. The designer of this concordance software, Laurence Anthony, is correct when he argues that “a corpus of language is virtually useless without a computer software tool to process it and display results in an easy to understand way” (Anthony, 2005: 729). His concordance software does just that, and was selected for the purposes of this thesis as it is easy to use and presents the results in a simple, easily read way. There are some alternatives to AntConc concordance software, such as WordSmith by linguist Mike Scott, which includes all the basic functions used in the analyses for this thesis. One major advantage of AntConc over WordSmith is that it may be downloaded free of charge. This may be partly why an increasing number of corpus linguistic studies are carried out using AntConc and, with many researchers recommending it, and with it having all the necessary functions for my research, it was the best choice for this thesis. AntConc was used primarily in this research to examine significant terms – by which I mean words and phrases which I deemed significant to the particular topic under discussion – and their frequency and regular collocates.

The software is incredibly simple to use – with the word or phrase simply typed into the search box AntConc’s concordance feature pulls up all of its occurrences in context. The search levels were set so that the word or phrase would be shown with 10 words of context on either side. When searching for different forms of a word, this was done with the use of an asterisk (*) as a wildcard, which gives all results which contain both the string of letters typed, and any other letters appearing either before, after that string, or both, depending on where the asterisk is placed. For example, when examining the

occurrences of both the noun and adjective “morality” and “moral”, and its adverb form “morally”, this could be done by inserting the search term “moral*”. Similarly, when searching for occurrences of the noun “culture” and its adjective form “cultural”, there was the option to either conduct two separate searches, inserting the terms in full into the search box, or to use the search term “cultur*” which would display all occurrences of both. When discussing the idea of reward and punishment, “incentive” was deemed a significant term and, in order to pull up all its variations using the software, the search term “*incentiv*” was used, to find all occurrences of “incentive/s”, “disincentive/s”, “incentivise”, “disincentivise”, “incentivising” and “disincentivising”. Using this software, such significant words and phrases were extracted in context and the main analysis methods described above were then applied throughout. The significant words and/or phrases searched for in this thesis appear in **bold** throughout.

Through this method, I examined the context and collocation in the thesis of terms which I discovered, in my reading of the corpus of the speeches with regards to the theories of constructed opposition and metaphor outlined above, were of particular interest to my analysis (in the chapters which follow). The use of AntConc enabled me to be systematic and rigorous in the analysis of these terms, in the best tradition of corpus linguistics.

Chapter 3

The Language of Reform:

Why the Welfare Budget in Particular?

3.1 Background

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 was designed to make savings of £18 billion per year by means of deep cuts to the welfare budget, of which secretary of State for Work and Pensions Iain Duncan Smith is in charge. In October 2012, the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne announced in his speech to the Conservative Party conference his intention to introduce further cuts of £10 billion per year from this particular budget. Whilst certainly generating some controversy and opposition, these proposals have been met relatively widely with acceptance, if not always approval. As of the end of May 2013, the Chancellor was in the process of attempting to make a further £8 billion of cuts and had been under pressure to take these, once again, from the welfare budget. One Cabinet Minister applying this pressure was Defence Secretary Philip Hammond. Like others, keen to protect his own budget, he presented the welfare budget as being the fairest and most obvious choice: “In an interview with the Daily Telegraph, he said other Conservative Cabinet Ministers believed that the greatest burden of any cuts should fall on the welfare budget” (Independent online 20.03.13). Given the size of the cuts being taken from this particular budget, one may propose that this is a shared belief, certainly among Conservatives and possibly by Iain Duncan Smith.

It is the aim of this chapter of the thesis to ask “why?” to this particular question. This relates to research question 1 (“What political ideologies are present and on what conceptual metaphor systems

are these political ideologies based?”), and question 3 (“How are these metaphors and underlying ideologies realised through the vocabulary, grammar and syntax of these political speeches?”) – asking specifically “why and how is this argument presented in the dataset?” That is to say, what is the conceptual framework that lies behind this conclusion and how is this realised/ argued for linguistically within these 32 speeches? The chapter also touches on research question 4 (“Ultimately, what is the potential for the language used in these speeches to influence what UK citizens will allow, or even encourage to happen to the welfare state?”) by considering the potential impact of the linguistic strategies uncovered on those listening to or reading these speeches.

3.2 Linguistic Strategies

Duncan Smith does not explicitly state in the dataset that the welfare budget should rightly bear the greatest burden of cuts – but I will argue that this is implied, as the size of that budget is presented as being a major contributing factor of the deficit that has led to austerity measures being implemented. For a detailed picture of the argument for taking the majority of cuts from the welfare budget, this chapter will look at the following in sequence:

- The NATION IS A FAMILY metaphor: The argument for austerity itself, and the conceptual metaphors which frame the economy in such a way that austerity is seen as the only option. Here, Lakoff’s (1996) political metaphor framework is applied to uncover and explain the underlying conceptual metaphors in the speeches, and the political ideology they relate to. The concordance software AntConc was also used to pull up occurrences of words and phrases significant to these metaphors.
- Exaggeration: The welfare system as a dangerous force.

Certain significant terms pertaining to force and growth were identified in this section and searched for using the concordance software AntConc. All occurrences were extracted in context and then examined, with the above frameworks applied where appropriate.

- The argument that the benefits system should “make work pay”. As most reasonable people would agree that work should indeed pay for the worker, the way in which this claim is framed within the dataset was examined.

Here, “mak* work pay” is the repeated significant term that was searched for using the concordance software AntConc. All occurrences were extracted in context and then examined, with the above frameworks applied where appropriate.

This chapter will focus on illustrating how acceptance of the necessity of austerity - through the NATION IS A FAMILY and subsequent THE NATIONAL BUDGET IS A HOUSEHOLD BUDGET metaphors - is exploited and progressed to argue for the necessity of austerity focused on the welfare budget in particular. What follows is an overview of the picture being created of the welfare system, and a list of observations about the linguistic strategies used to justify the assertion that there is no other option but to target it for cuts.

3.2.1 The NATION IS A FAMILY: The Argument for Austerity Itself

Before we consider Duncan Smith’s arguments for the welfare budget as the most obvious candidate for cuts, it is first necessary to look at the argument for spending cuts in general, and it is the aim of this section to show that both the arguments for these, and their wide acceptance, stem from the almost universal conceptual metaphor – in western politics at any rate - of the NATION IS A FAMILY, and its consequent metaphor of THE NATIONAL BUDGET IS A HOUSEHOLD BUDGET. Lakoff (1996: 153) argues that “part of our conceptual systems... is the conception of the NATION AS FAMILY, with the government, or head of

state representing the government, seen as an older male authority figure, typically a father.” Lakoff describes two central, prototypical models of family morality from which political morality is metaphorically mapped: the Strict Father (conservative/Right) model, and the Nurturant Parent (liberal/Left) model. These two models are explained in greater detail in chapter 5, section 5.1. For now, it is important to note that reward and punishment and competition are central to the Strict Father model while nurturance and cooperation are central to the Nurturant Parent model. The idea of this conceptual mapping from domain of family to nation is something Lakoff expounds in some detail in his 1996 book “Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think” and, while that work is specifically about American political and conceptual systems, there is a great deal of overlap with British modes of conceptualising both the familial and political domains. Just as in America, where “an argument regularly used for the balanced-budget amendment is that, just as a family’s budget must be balanced, so must a nation’s” (Lakoff, 1996: 154), in this dataset we see occurrences of this conceptual metaphor applied to the British national budget. When a household budget is “tight”, the head of the family responds by “tightening the purse strings”, i.e. cutting back on spending. The purse here is a metaphor for the amount of money the household receives from income and there are normally very few, if any, ways in which the family is able to increase this, meaning the strings of the metaphorical purse must be pulled tight to avoid overspending and keep the household with enough money for all its essential services and goods. We can see this conceptual metaphor mapped from the household onto the nation, that is, from the familial to the political domains, in this dataset. The noun phrase “the public purse” occurs seven times:

- “...social investment needs to be part of the solution, rewarding investors when their money yields savings to **the public purse** and delivers improvements in young people’s lives.” (Appendix 1: 1980-1982)

- “...where we can turn a young person’s life around, the savings to **the public purse** are potentially huge.” (*ibid*: 2500-2501)
- “These investors are then rewarded with some of the savings to **the public purse** further down the line...” (*ibid*: 2511-2512)
- “Government could benefit from more capital up front to invest in savings to **the public purse.**” (*ibid*: 3186)
- “...here we are looking to set people on a journey to a decent and sustainable retirement, whilst also reducing the pressure on **the public purse**” (*ibid*: 4493-4495)
- “...and Government itself should see savings to **the public purse** from the reduced costs of social breakdown.” (*ibid*: 3561-3562)

Note that, in the final example above, it is not the public that “sees savings to the public purse”, but the government. In this sense, the metaphorical purse itself does not belong to the public, but contains funds intended to be spent on the public, by the government. The public does not hold the purse strings and it cannot access the purse’s contents autonomously but, rather, the government is in control of its contents and makes the decisions about how it is spent, much as a parent will be in charge of his or her children’s accounts. So, when the government “rewards investors with savings to the public purse”, this can be conceptualised as money from the public purse being spent outside the public sphere. This seems quite normal and fair, if those receiving the money have provided the public with goods or services which bring improvement to lives. There is a strong belief depicted in this dataset, that employers will be highly motivated by cash rewards and that, naturally, they will then do all they can to offer real help to these individuals. This is indicative of the centrality of the morality of reward and punishment to the moral framework behind this government’s policies, and illustrates that it is to the Strict Father model of family that Iain Duncan Smith, and the government he represents, most closely

adheres. This is further illustrated and discussed in chapter 5. The situation as described in the dataset is one in which employers, who represent a special case of the group called “taxpayer”, are rewarded only when they provide real help to those looking to increase their income through work and thereby improve their lives and “move up the [socioeconomic] ladder”. (*ibid*: 3414; 5089; 6144; 6413)

This recurrence of the metaphor of a public purse, the strings of which are being tightened by austerity, represents the metaphor of THE NATIONAL BUDGET IS A HOUSEHOLD BUDGET and is a direct result of the larger conceptual metaphor of THE NATION IS A FAMILY. Combined, the noun “family” and its plural form “families” appear in the dataset 311 times and Duncan Smith talks, in these 32 speeches, a great deal about the importance of family. He even asserts that it is not the place of government to interfere or to “be in the business of prescribing how people live their lives” (Appendix 1: 822). However, much of his reasoning throughout the dataset can best be understood in the context of the conceptual metaphor of the nation itself as a family with the government as head of it, controlling the purse strings. Duncan Smith’s assertion that his government is not “in the business of prescribing how people live their lives” is demonstrably false, and arguably unavoidably so. Indeed, for many, the main if not only purpose of government is to maintain order and balance among its citizens. How this could be achieved without some degree of prescriptivism is difficult to imagine. If it were not in the business of prescribing, at least in part, how people should live their lives, it would not display such disapproval as is present in this dataset, of the choices (and what are presented as choices at any rate, as we shall see in chapter 4) made by some citizens. It would not promise rewards for those who “do the right thing” (*ibid*: 1586) nor threaten “sanctions for those who refuse to play by the rules” (*ibid*: 1069) if it did not feel it had, at least to some degree, the authority to prescribe what people ought to be doing and subsequently to punish those not doing it. Furthermore, the above assertion by Duncan Smith that his government should not prescribe how people live their lives is uttered explicitly in relation to family and yet there are several

instances throughout the dataset of impassioned pleas for the encouragement and support of what he calls a “most fundamental institution”: marriage (*ibid*: 1276-1277).

3.2.2 Morality in Politics

Morality, as Lakoff explains, is central to the way a government rules its nation in the same way it is central to the way in which a parent will rule, or raise, their family. He explains that it is demonstrably the case that government agencies function from a deep sense of what is right and wrong, rather than simply doing what is cost-effective to the taxpayer. This is empirically true of this government, as represented in the speeches of this Cabinet Minister, with the search term “moral*” yielding seven results. Below are three examples:

- “...an ‘educational underclass’ is **morally** unacceptable to this Government” (*ibid*: 3519-3520)
- “family breakdown has led to a sort of **moral** vacuum in some areas of society” (*ibid*: 2273-2274)
- “...there is no point in simply lecturing [the workless] about the **moral** purpose of work”
(*ibid*: 4438-4439; 5340)

The noun phrase “the right thing” appears 5 times in the dataset. The definite article here notably suggests that there is one clear, correct course of action. Carrying a similar definite sense of what is right, we also find “the right direction” 4 times; “the right way” twice, and “the right path” once. Similarly, there are 4 occurrences of a noun phrase with the definite article, modified by the adjective “wrong”:

- “...perverse incentives which rewarded **the wrong choices** and meant that work didn’t pay”
(Appendix 1: 1532-1533)

- “...yet some of these are really bright kids, just born into **the wrong circumstances**.
(*ibid*: 2444-2445)
- “But their potential is left unrealised, sometimes perverted by **the wrong peer group...**”
(*ibid*: 4852)
- “What it should not do is tug you in **the wrong direction**, to a place where you receive so much in benefits that a return to work is unaffordable” (*ibid*: 5871-5872)

This creates a presupposition that there exists a clear knowledge about what is *not* the one right choice, circumstance, peer group and direction respectively. The presupposition created by the use of the definite article and the adjectives “right” and “wrong” evokes Lakoff’s idea of bounded movement metaphors. He states that “moral action is seen as bounded movement, movement in permissible areas and along permissible paths” (Lakoff 1996: 84). This can be seen as choosing the right path. “Given this, immoral action is seen as motion outside of the permissible range, as straying from a prescribed path...” (*ibid*) This can be seen as choosing the wrong path. Furthermore, the very existence of the Centre for Social Justice, which Duncan Smith founded “to put social justice at the heart of British politics” (Centre for Social Justice online) and mentions 36 times throughout these speeches, demonstrates that morality is indeed a priority for government. This may seem natural, since most people have strong beliefs about what is right and what is wrong and so it would be unrealistic, and I would suggest undesirable, to expect the people who make up government not to bring those beliefs into what they hope to achieve in power. The very pursuit of social justice entails a belief that there exists some state of being that, if reached, would constitute a socially just, or morally correct, society. The government therefore possesses a strong sense of what the right and the wrong states of being are; what the right and the wrong kinds of decisions are, and feels it has legitimate authority to reward and punish the latter

accordingly, in order to achieve and avoid the former respectively. Accepting that our moral sense comes from our upbringing, we can see that the government itself does indeed import its family-based morality into the political domain.

3.2.3 The Prevalence of the NATION IS A FAMILY Metaphor

To demonstrate that the conceptual metaphor THE NATION IS A FAMILY is indeed a widely used one in present-day Britain, let us look at the commonly presented argument for austerity and how this is reflected in the dataset. In Britain since the recession began in 2008, it has been common to encounter general assessments of the economy that are familiar in domestic settings, in the context of household budgets, for example “times are tough/ hard”, and this is reflected in this dataset:

- “ even now, in **difficult** times” (Appendix 1 Dataset: 1237)
- “Of course things are even **tougher** now” (*ibid*: 2852)
- “Ironically, perhaps, it has taken **difficult** times to create a driver for change”
(*ibid*: 4608)
- “...we are making some progress even in an immensely **tough** economic climate.”
(*ibid*: 5635-5636)

Indeed, the Conservative Party slogan “we’re all in it together” is coherent with this metaphor which has the household as its source domain, and paves the way for the purse string metaphor, discussed above, to be introduced to explain austerity measures. It describes a situation in which all people are affected equally by their shared circumstances. In a household, each member is necessarily affected by a

shortage of income and will feel the effects as the “purse strings” are tightened. When such a shortage befalls a household, for example if a breadwinner loses their job, or simply through rising living costs set against stagnant wage levels, we understand that an immediate and logical reaction is to cut back on spending, or “tighten the purse strings” of the family budget. From this common understanding, it is no great leap to arrive at the understanding that when the economy is struggling, things are tight for the nation in the same way that they are tight for a family when a breadwinner is no longer earning, or not earning enough. What drives this seemingly short leap to that particular understanding is the conceptual mapping of the household domain onto the national domain - the familial to the political - as discussed above. As Lakoff points out, “any economist, liberal or conservative, knows that there are many crucial differences between a family and a nation that make the analogy economically ludicrous: a family can’t initiate economic stimulus programs, print new currency, or increase tax rates. Yet, despite this, the unconscious and automatic NATION IS A FAMILY metaphor in our conceptual systems makes the logic seem to be just commonsense to most people.” (Lakoff 1996: 154) So we can see that, although widely accepted, the metaphor is flawed and can lead to a situation in which we are blinkered to other possible courses of action. I return, in chapter 5, to look at this metaphor in more detail and to ask, if the nation is a family, what kind of family is it? This metaphor provides the framework for an argument in which austerity is the only sensible response to the economic crisis.

3.2.4 Spiralling Out of Control: The Welfare System as Dangerous Force

In these 32 speeches, Iain Duncan Smith linguistically constructs a picture of present-day Britain in which austerity measures, with a focus on the welfare budget in particular, are seen as necessary and fair. The representation of the fairness of this depends to a great extent on the family-based morality discussed

above. I return to this in some detail in chapter 5 when expounding my argument that Duncan Smith is coming very much from a Strict Father viewpoint. Central to the argument, both for austerity itself and for the focus on welfare, is the argument that there is no other choice. We saw above that austerity itself is represented as being the only option as a result of a flawed yet conscious and automatic mapping from the familial to political domains. With regard to the focus on welfare, that lack of choice is constructed, as is shown below, in a way that frames the welfare budget as a major factor in the UK financial crisis. Once this is accepted, it seems to follow logically that welfare should be targeted for austerity measures and even “bear the greatest burden of any cuts” as Philip Hammond (Independent online 02.03.13) has stated. Duncan Smith explains why the welfare budget must be targeted:

- “This agenda is, I believe, a bold agenda. But we have no choice. With the welfare budget ballooning over the last few years, we need to shift the culture which underpins demand.”

(Appendix 1: 525-527)

This idea of a “culture” driving the demand for welfare is the focus of chapter 4 and essential to understanding how those who claim benefits are represented in these speeches, i.e. as doing so, to a large extent, unnecessarily.

3.2.5 Inputs rather than Outcomes: the Construction of Dichotomous Choice

This section looks at the construction of dichotomous choice, in the assignment of responsibility for the UK financial crisis. As Duncan Smith states:

“[The previous government’s “focus on inputs”] may not have caused the financial crisis, but it put us in a terrible position when the storm hit – take the fact that the UK had the highest structural deficit in the G7 even before the crisis began.

If you just look at spending on welfare benefits you can see that it increased by a staggering 35% in real terms in the decade before the recession – a decade of rising employment” (*ibid*: 3882-3885)

The modality at the beginning of the above statement has the effect of creating some possible uncertainty about the cause of the financial crisis. What Duncan Smith is suggesting is that overspending (importantly, from the “public purse”) by the previous government did not in fact cause the financial crisis, certainly not in isolation at any rate. The sense of this is arguably conveyed by “may not have” although the modal auxiliary “may” occupies a semantic space in which doubt is importantly present. Had he said, instead “even though this was not the cause of the financial crisis...” the meaning would have remained but been delivered in a stronger way, leaving out that room for doubt which supports his attack on the public spending habits of the previous government. Interestingly, the term “overspending” is not actually used and instead it is described as an “obsession with inputs” (X 4 *ibid*: 3873; 4330; 5302; 5810) and a “focus on inputs” (X 3 *ibid*: 4087; 4515; 5429). I believe this is a strategy used to facilitate the representation of this government being faced with a choice between inputs or outputs. This is examined further in chapter 5, section 5.3.1, but the main reason I feel this is used instead of “overspending” is that it is not so easy to construct a picture of a clear dichotomous choice with that term, without painting his government in a negative light, as the evoked opposite would be “underspending” which carries negative connotations. Duncan Smith can easily argue for a focus on “outcomes not inputs” (X 3 *ibid*: 3617; 6154; 6212) while presenting the focus on outcomes as a positive thing and yet, oddly, the consequence of this is to suggest that very little or even no focus can be given

to inputs - or spending - as a result. This is revealing of his construction of a picture of clear, dichotomous choice. What is initially suggested by the above statement is that the spending habits of the previous government contributed significantly to the financial difficulty in which the UK now finds itself, underscored by repetition of statements that his government “inherited” these financial problems from the previous government. This will be discussed further, below. That this is then followed immediately by an invitation to focus on what was spent on welfare specifically, creates the impression that this area was a particular focus of this overspending, or “obsession with inputs.” Furthermore, the phrasing of this as “just look...” evokes a sense of how clear or obvious it should be to a hearer/reader that this area is of particular concern.

3.2.6 “Broken and Ballooning”: Intensifying Metaphors of Emergency

One of the simplest ways in which Duncan Smith argues for the necessity of reforms to the welfare state is by arguing that it is “broken”. Naturally, if something is broken, we will agree that it should be mended, since conventional opposites such as these tend to evoke one another (Jeffries, 2010: 51). That the legislative reforms contained within the Welfare Reform Act constitute the correct way to mend it, does not necessarily follow, but convincing the public that change of some kind is required is an essential step and, to that end, we find this claim that the system is broken repeated throughout the dataset. The system is described as “breaking” once and “broken” nine times, for example:

- “In fact, some of the people I have talked to...have told me that the system they administer with such dedication is indeed **breaking** and in need of urgent attention.”
(Appendix 1: 11-13)

- “Today I want to talk to you about reform of our **broken** benefits system” (*ibid*: 542)
- “When I entered Office almost two years ago I came determined to bring change to a **broken** welfare system” (*ibid*: 3377-3378)
- “We are working to secure the independence that work brings – and freedom from the dependency that is too often the product of a **broken** welfare system” (*ibid*: 3647-3648)

This repeated claim that the system is broken is given more urgency by the suggestion that the problems, or breakages, it has are increasing or worsening. The welfare budget is depicted throughout the dataset as being too large, and growing too fast. There is a sense of urgency evoked by the language used which supports the argument that drastic measures are needed, and must be taken quickly. The budget itself is described via the metaphor of a balloon, on five occasions:

- With the welfare budget **ballooning** over the last few years, we need to shift the culture which underpins demand. (*ibid*: 526-527)
- When welfare spending **balloons** – as it has done – the temptation for successive governments has been to squeeze it back down again. (X 2 *ibid*: 4398-4399; 5314-5315)
- But – rather like a **balloon** – when you squeeze it at one end it will tend to grow at the other. (*ibid*: 4400)
- But rather like a **balloon**, when you squeeze it at one end it will tend to grow at the other. (*ibid*: 5315-5316)

This balloon image is also used, only once, to depict not just the welfare budget, but the welfare system itself. The budget is explicitly and repeatedly described as too large, and growing like a balloon. This can be clearly understood in financial terms. Duncan Smith is suggesting that too much money is being spent

on welfare and that this must be reduced. The consequence of then applying this to the system as a whole is to suggest that it is not just the cost that is too high, but also the amount of assistance provided by the system. “So instead of facing up to the challenge of a broken and ballooning welfare system...” (*ibid*: 646).

The metaphor here seems mixed, as a “broken” balloon will not grow. Indeed, a “break” in a balloon is the very thing that occurs when it goes beyond its maximum size, and bursts. However, it seems that the “ballooning” image is being applied to the breakages themselves, to create an image of ever-widening cracks in the system: “Successive governments have failed to get to grips with an increasingly broken system” (*ibid*: 643).

If the welfare system is indeed “ballooning” then the obvious danger is that it too will burst, and the suggestion in the above statements is that this has already occurred, although the break may at this point be localised in one part of the balloon while it continues to grow elsewhere. Nonetheless, a balloon can only grow so large before it bursts. This idea is supported by Duncan Smith’s description of a society in which large numbers of people are claiming benefits unnecessarily (see chapter 4), as well as of “successive governments” who have been “obsessed with inputs”. These two groups can be thought of as blowing air into this metaphorical balloon. In the same way that a balloon can only sustain so much air, the argument here is that the welfare system can only sustain so much “input” and demand, before breaking completely.

3.2.7 “The Emperor’s New Clothes Gambit” and the Necessity of Reform

To further his argument for the necessity of reforms, and supported by this fragile “balloon” metaphor, Duncan Smith uses a strategy that Hoey calls “the Emperor’s new clothes gambit” (Hoey, 2000: 33) This is a flawed form of reasoning in which he “begs the question”, assuming the truth of his conclusions, and describing those conclusions as “clear” and “obvious”. However, “the obviousness of the remarks only becomes apparent if the reader has already accepted the theory to which he or she is being encouraged to prescribe” (*ibid*: 33)

- “Because under the pensions means test, hard-working people who try to save can find themselves retiring on the same income as their neighbour – someone who hasn’t saved at all but is eligible to claim for Pension Credit.

What kind of message does that send out?

It tells people on low incomes that it’s not worth saving – it’s not even worth working. Just sit back and wait for the government to pay out when you retire...

...Even before the recession we accumulated one of the highest rates of personal debt in the whole of Western Europe, around £1.5 trillion – the size of the whole UK economy.

We embraced a culture of ‘live now, pay later’ and looked to future generations to pick up the bill...

...How far from Beveridge’s original vision.

And **clearly** a system ripe for reform.” (Appendix 1: 5834-5846)

The reference to William Beveridge, architect of the UK welfare state, here serves to suggest that the system he envisaged is not what we have today and subsequently that it should be altered to more closely resemble what he had in mind. Whether this is true or not, I would argue that it is unclear how this follows from a statement about the levels of personal debt in the UK. While it may be true that Beveridge would not have desired a society in which people had high levels of personal debt, it does not necessarily follow from that, that the welfare or pensions systems in place are responsible for this. Notably, there is no consideration of the role played by low wage levels or high rents and other living costs. Rather, the reasoning falls back on an assumption about human nature: what Lakoff calls “folk behaviourism” (Lakoff 1996: 67) which says that if people think they can get something for nothing, they will naturally simply take, and do nothing. The statement “it is not even worth working. Just sit back...” delivered as part of a public policy lecture at the University of Cambridge, could be seen as illustrative of the speaker’s negative assumptions about human nature, consistent with a Strict Father worldview. This is explored in detail in chapter 5.

- “Taking Housing Benefit first, no-one can really doubt these reforms are long overdue.

In real terms, the cost of working age HB has jumped by £5 billion in 5 years and is projected to reach £21 billion in 2014/15.

This is clearly unsustainable.” (*ibid*: 394-397)

That “no-one can really doubt these reforms are long overdue” is a bold assertion and its effect, in line with the “Emperor’s new clothes” strategy, is “to make anyone who does [doubt it] suspect his or her own judgement.” (Hoey 2000: 33) The case of Housing Benefit is particularly interesting in these speeches for two reasons:

1. The role played by high rents and low wages on the demand for Housing Benefit is never addressed.
2. Related to 1: despite not being a benefit solely for those who are out of work, it is consistently spoken about as if it were (discussed further in chapter 4, section 4.3.8).

The conclusion that “this is clearly unsustainable” is not really argued for here. Rather, we are simply provided with monetary sums and expected, from there, to arrive at this same conclusion. It is not my suggestion that the conclusion is necessarily false; only that it does not necessarily follow from the figures alone. However, the figures given are, to any normal person, huge and it is this which gives the speaker confidence that they will be accepted as “unsustainable”, in the way that a balloon’s growth is unsustainable, past a certain point: it can only grow so large before breaking. Indeed, one of the most effective rhetorical techniques within this dataset is a form of “the Emperor’s new clothes gambit”. This strategy, in which Duncan Smith refers to both the necessity of his controversial reforms and to the answers to potential criticisms as “clear” and “obvious”, is heavily bolstered by the apparent affirmation of his arguments by figures of authority, both contemporary and historical, making the hearer all the more disinclined to disagree. These authority figures range from nameless experts, to quite detailed claims that highly influential and well-respected historical social reformers, such as Sir William Beveridge and Robert Owen, would have agreed with what he is implementing. I shall return to these latter arguments in more detail later in chapter 5 as they are essential to understanding the use of Nurturant Parent language in the dataset. If we look for now at the following quote from the dataset:

“What, perhaps, is most remarkable is the degree of consensus among academics and, most importantly, inspirational leaders and community charities, that we need a new approach to tackling persistent poverty” (Appendix 1: 31-33)

This is an example of a recurring technique throughout the dataset, in which Duncan Smith reveals an

alleged consensus that change is necessary, whether in the way poverty is tackled, as above, or in the way the benefits system functions. However, those behind this consensus are not identified to any specific degree. The most information we are ever offered is a place of employment or, as above, a general title such as “academic” or “inspirational leaders”. It is not clear to whom these refer and there is no further information offered to clear this up. Further examples of this include:

- “People are keen to be involved in our programme of reform” (*ibid*: 10)
- “In fact, some of the people I have talked to – while in no way commenting on the previous government – have told me that the system they administer with such dedication is indeed breaking and in need of urgent attention.” (*ibid*: 11-13)

In order for these to be interpreted as an argument for agreement that these legislative changes are the right course of action, the argument would need to be formulated something like the following fallacy:

Premise 1: Experts (and commentators) have agreed that a new approach is needed.

Premise 2: We have implemented a new approach.

Conclusion: Experts (and commentators) must therefore agree with our new approach.

Similarly, in the last example of the above section, the fact that staff within the Benefits System have reported believing that the system “needs attention” does not entail that they would agree with the *kind* of attention it has been given in the Welfare Reform Act. Some may well agree, but this is not explicitly argued for, and in fact many charities have spoken out in the media against the speaker’s reforms. No evidence for such agreement is presented yet again, and the implicature seems to be that such agreement exists – “People are keen to be involved in our programme of reform” is presented as factual and then “In fact, some of the people I have talked to – while in no way commenting on the previous government – have told me that the system they administer with such dedication is indeed

breaking and in need of urgent attention”, coming immediately thereafter, seems to be offered as evidence. However, the former does not necessarily follow logically from the latter and so the argument is invalid and fallacious:

Premise 1: Staff have told me the Benefits System needs attention.

Premise 2: We have given the Benefits System attention (in the form of reforms)

Conclusion: Staff must therefore agree that these reforms are right.

3.2.8 The Language of Exaggeration

Costs of welfare are presented in the above ways throughout the dataset, while being emphasised by adjectives such as “huge” and “staggering” and also commonly by the emphatic determiner “some”.

These strategies are also applied to discussions of the numbers of people who use the welfare system.

- “And it is racked by fraud and error – **some** £5 billion lost annually because of the immense complexity of the system.” (Appendix 1: 2457-2458)
- “...which helps to explain why it costs multiple agencies £3.5 billion to administer the benefits system and why fraud and error accounts for £5 billion a year...

...We can tackle these **staggering** numbers by re-balancing the risk and reward trade-off for the poorest.

To do so, we need nothing less than a complete rethink of the benefit system.” (*ibid*: 595-601)

What is interesting here is that the “staggering numbers” presented are significantly lower than the figure for benefits that go unclaimed each year – that is, the amount of benefits money to which it is

estimated people are entitled, but do not claim. This was reported to be £12.5 billion in 2009-2010 (DWP figures, reported in BBC News online 23.02.12) and yet this lower figure is presented as being so “staggering” as to necessitate a “complete rethink of the benefit system”. This suggests that this rethink is not simply a money-saving exercise by the government, but a moral pursuit, as discussed above.

3.2.9 The “Spiral” Metaphor

Similar to the idea of a “ballooning” budget and system, is the repeated evocation of a “spiral” metaphor in Duncan Smith’s description of the welfare budget. It is typically used in its verb form to describe the budget itself, and in noun form to describe the negative situations the cuts to welfare spending are intended to tackle, as illustrated below:

- “The cost of Housing Benefit and Incapacity Benefit has **spiralled** out of control in recent years and put a great burden on the taxpayer.” (Appendix 1: 389-390)
- “Our reforms are about improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged – not changing people but restoring them.

Breaking the **spirals** of deprivation, and giving them the opportunity to take control of their own lives.” (*ibid*: 6149-6150)

The image evoked by “spiralled out of control” is a strong and alarming one. Something that “spirals” is growing ever wider or tighter, or in the sense of an aeroplane is about to crash. Here, the area covered by the “spiralling” phenomenon (either in geographical terms or in terms of the number of people affected) may be growing ever larger while, at the same time, the intensity of its effects increases or tightens its hold on those affected. Contrary to what we would expect a government-administered

system to look like, this statement evokes a picture of a powerful and chaotic force (for example a tornado or whirlpool); the system has acquired an excess of energy and become a force in its own right, under no one's control. If this is the case, it seems reasonable that something must be done to stop it before it causes tremendous damage. In this way, to describe it as "out of control" achieves the goal of convincing us that something must be done but, at the same time, represents a surprising admission of a lack of control by a representative of the very body that ought to have control over it. This is where the importance of "inheritance" comes into play. The situation described above, in which the welfare system has become a dangerous "out of control" force is a situation which Duncan Smith, importantly, explains his government did not create but, rather "inherited" from the previous government. This is stated explicitly 6 times in the dataset and underlined a further 6 times by reference to the failings of "successive governments".

This same idea of an uncontrolled force is evoked by the noun phrase "spirals of deprivation". Its modification by the prepositional phrase "of deprivation" gives focus to this force. Here, it is deprivation that is out of control. Deprivation is of course highly undesirable; it is something that, where it exists, we prefer to believe is under some kind of control: that it is being addressed and reduced by all possible measures. It is important to note that deprivation is, to a large extent, represented in this dataset as being geographically contained. This is explored in some detail in chapter 4, section 4.3.1 under my analysis of "cultural", but it is important to bear in mind this idea of socioeconomic problems being confined and yet, due to the spiralling or ballooning welfare system, now in danger of breaking out of that confinement. To conceptualise deprivation as this force of nature is frightening. It is frightening, not only because we empathise with the people in that situation but, and perhaps even more importantly, because to be close to any out of control force is to be in danger. This suggestion that those outwith the deprived group should feel a sense of danger from it is explored further in chapters 4 and 5.

3.3 Making Work Pay

As we have seen, Duncan Smith constructs a picture of a welfare system which is “broken and ballooning”. This picture suggests that, not only is it fraught with problems but these are increasing exponentially, demonstrating the need for something to be done urgently to prevent it from breaking completely, or bursting like a balloon. Importantly, it is not just to avert this disaster that the reforms are being implemented, but also to effect a real, positive change to society. It is designed to effect a “cultural change”, as we see in chapter 4. One of the major goals of these changes to the welfare system, Duncan Smith says, is to “make work pay”. Using the search term “mak* work pay” in AntConc reveals that this phrase is used in relation to the benefits system 20 times throughout these speeches. For example:

- “We are also reforming the welfare system to **make work pay**” (Appendix 1: 973)
- “We have to make the system simple.

We have to **make work pay**.” (*ibid*: 1145-1146)

- “First, make the system simple and **make work pay**.” (*ibid*: 1150)
- “[The system] will be clear, it will be consistent and – most importantly – it will **make work pay**.” (*ibid*: 2462)

It is striking that it should be consistently suggested that the responsibility for “making work pay” falls rightly on the welfare system, especially when even some full-time workers rely on benefits such as Housing Benefit or tax credits, to make ends meet. This suggestion that it is the responsibility of the welfare system, rather than the labour market, to “make work pay” has significant ideological

implications, stemming from reverence for competition and the free market, as is explored further in chapter 5, sections 5.1.1 and 5.3.

3.4 Conclusions

This chapter has aimed to show the linguistic strategies which set out the arguments both for austerity itself and for the focus on cuts to welfare spending. These are as follows:

- The claim that there is no other choice but austerity.
- Exaggeration of the problems faced by the system, as well as of the severity of measures required to address them. This is realised through the evocation of imagery of dangerous forces, “ballooning” and “spiralling” out of control. Costs are described as “staggering” while the even higher amount of annually unclaimed money, representing money saved, is unmentioned.
- The foregrounding and positive framing of the goal of “making work pay” while backgrounding or even ignoring the fact that work often does not pay, even for some people in full time employment, due to low wage levels and high rents and other living costs.

In uncovering these, it has begun to address some of the thesis’ main research questions:

Question 1 (“What political ideologies are present and on what conceptual metaphor systems are these political ideologies based?”). Although these ideas have not yet been explored in full, we have already had a very brief introduction to the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent worldviews and a discussion of the centrality of reward and punishment and the importance, to this worldview, of competition. It is this reverence of competition which protects the free market and employers, under a Strict Father

government. This, I suggest, is what leads to this idea that it is the welfare system, and not employers or the labour market, which must be seen to make work pay. This chapter was focussed most heavily on showing the existence of the THE NATION IS A FAMILY metaphor and only began to touch on the *kind* of family it is. This will be explored in greater detail in chapter 5.

Question 3 (“How are these metaphors and underlying ideologies realised through the vocabulary, grammar and syntax of these political speeches?”). This chapter asked specifically “why and how is this argument presented in the dataset?” This was achieved through the listing of linguistic strategies employed to construct a picture of the present welfare system as unsustainable. This in turn uncovered metaphors indicating the presence of this THE NATION IS A FAMILY metaphor, with particular focus on the phrase “purse strings” which was argued to be indicative of the presence of the strongly related THE NATIONAL BUDGET IS A FAMILY BUDGET metaphor. The chapter also touches on research question 4 (“Ultimately, what is the potential for the language used in these speeches to influence what UK citizens will allow, or even encourage to happen to the welfare state?”) as it suggests that those accepting this THE NATION IS A FAMILY and its subsequent metaphor THE NATIONAL BUDGET IS A FAMILY BUDGET may not be in a position to conceive of alternative ways of combating financial hardship and so simply accept that austerity is the only solution.

Chapter 4

The “Cultural Issue”

4.1 Introduction and Background of “workless(ness)”

In chapter 3 it was demonstrated that the targeting of the welfare budget in particular has been justified, in Iain Duncan Smith’s speeches, in economic terms, i.e. that the costs associated with the benefits system are especially “unsustainable” (Appendix 1: 397; 1108). The focus of this chapter is on what is said to be driving these costs, and how this is represented in the speeches. The following analyses will show that it is what the speaker calls a “culture of worklessness” (*ibid*: 3787; 6287) that is being put forward as the main driving force behind these costs. They will demonstrate that there is a consistent foregrounding of this concept throughout the dataset which takes focus away from economic factors and places it almost solely on the social. The picture of a society in which this “cultural issue” (*ibid*: 462) is so prevalent that it has caused the benefits budget to become “unsustainable” is a controversial one, and this section of the thesis aims to expound how this picture is constructed through the vocabulary as well as the syntactic and grammatical features of these speeches.

Below are additional research questions, specific to this chapter:

- 1) What is the meaning of “worklessness” in the context of these speeches? (Related to main research question 3)
- 2) What is the impact of this? (Related to main research questions 2 & 4)

Labour Markets and Equality Policy Consultant, Declan Gaffney, points out that “‘Workless’ was occasionally used in academic works in the 1980s, but always as a synonym for ‘unemployed’.

‘Worklessness’ came to be used in a way that was both wider and more specific than ‘unemployment’ among labour market analysts. Wider, because it referred to the situation of not being employed for whatever reason, taking in both unemployment and economic inactivity.” (Gaffney 2012). As explained below, actively seeking work is a criterion of the category “unemployed” in the DWP vocabulary, while those people in situations covered by the term “workless” can be in a range of circumstances, some of which prevent them from being able to look for work. “Workless” is therefore normally used to apply to households in which there are no economically active individuals, rather than to the individuals themselves. A 2011 report on research carried out by the Social Disadvantage Research Centre, Oxford Institute of Social Policy, University of Oxford, on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions, states that “people are defined as ‘workless’ if they are involuntarily excluded from the labour market and in receipt of certain benefits. Five separate statistical client groups (as agreed with DWP) together form the composite category of overall worklessness:

- 1 Job seekers – unemployed, actively seeking work and claiming Jobseeker’s Allowance.
- 2 Incapacity benefits – unable to work due to work-limiting illness and claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) or Severe Disablement Allowance.
- 3 Lone parents – unable to work due to being a lone parent with a child aged under 16 and claiming Income Support.
- 4 Carers – unable to work due to caring responsibilities and claiming Carer’s Allowance.
- 5 Others – those claiming other out-of-work benefits (other Income Support, including Disability Premium, or Pension Credit under State Pension age) (Barnes *et al* 2011)

So we can see that “workless” can be useful, in statistics, as a hypernymic term for these sub-categories. If a household’s working-age occupants all come under one or more of the above categories, that household will be called “workless”, but there is no way to ascertain, from the term “workless” alone, to which of these sub-categories those occupants belong. It is interesting that the definition should explicitly state that those belonging to the category are “*involuntarily* excluded from the labour market” as this is quite contrary to the picture depicted of many, by the language of these speeches, as this chapter will show.

4.2 Methodology

In line with the methodologies and drawing on the frameworks described in chapter 2, sections 2.1 and 2.2, uncovering how this picture of “a culture of worklessness” is being constructed in the dataset, first involved carrying out a detailed analysis of the occurrences of two significant words: the nouns “culture” and “worklessness”, as well as looking at the function(s) of their corresponding adjective forms “workless” and “cultural”, and the adjectives used to describe the noun forms themselves. With the concordance software AntConc, the following methodology was used in the analysis of the two nouns:

- Extract all occurrences of the word with context (concordances)
- Examine all occurrences for their semantic prosody (regular collocation)
- Examine all occurrences for their grammatical properties

This involves a detailed look at modification. The major analysis here was of the grammatical role the word is playing in the extract, in terms of Simpson’s (1993) model of the transitivity framework. It also involves looking at whether grammatical or syntactic elements play a role in the construction of antonymy or synonymy. (Jeffries 2010)

4.3 Results

4.3.1 Culture/ cultural

Culture

“Culture” occurs 62 times in the dataset, highlighting its importance for the most commonly occurring topic covered by the speeches: welfare reform. Below are 10 examples of its concordance extracts, chosen to illustrate its main usages within the dataset:

- “With the welfare budget ballooning over the last few years, we need to shift the **culture** which underpins demand” (Appendix 1: 526-527)
- “Last month we saw this **culture** crystallized into its crudest form” (*ibid*: 2101)
- “We embraced a **culture** of ‘live now, pay later’ and looked to future generations to pick up the bill” (*ibid*: 4384)
- “This is a **culture** marked by an obsession with inputs” (*ibid*: 4330; 5302; 5810)
- “This entrenched **culture** of worklessness and dependency is not only the source of soaring welfare bills” (*ibid*: 6287)
- “we can start to tackle that damaging **culture** in our society that I spoke of earlier” (*ibid*: 2295-2296)
- “...namely a gradual but consistent move to a **culture** which values conspicuous consumption over the quality of our personal relationships” (*ibid*: 2301-2302)
- “Dealing with Britain’s violent gang **culture** is vital” (*ibid*: 3446)

- “...if we are to understand which policies actually change lives, and will actually start to turn this **culture** around” (*ibid*: 2994-2995)
- “There I spoke about a **culture** of recklessness and irresponsibility” (*ibid*: 2097)

Regular collocates (identified by AntConc):

Nouns: Spending, dependency, worklessness, problem, savings, generations.

Adjectives: Attributive: Self-obsessed, damaging, dysfunctional. **Predicative:** Unsustainable.

That “worklessness” is one of the main regular collocates of “culture” shows immediately that this idea of “worklessness” as a choice or way of life is present throughout the dataset. It can be argued that its semantic prosody is generally negative, as it collocates so regularly with other contextually negative nouns such as “spending”, “dependency” and “problem”. Even “savings” and “generations”, upon closer inspection, can be seen to carry negative connotations in this dataset as it is a savings culture that we are being argued *not* to have, while a culture of dependency and worklessness is something that is argued does exist, and spans generations. Its adjectival collocates are more clearly negative and add to the overall negativity of the noun’s semantic prosody.

In analysing the transitivity roles of these two significant words, Simpson’s (1993) framework was used. The table below shows that not all process types are represented and this is simply because there were no examples of that process involving the significant word in the dataset. Table 1 below shows the transitivity roles played by the noun “culture”, throughout the dataset. We can see that the most commonly occurring role of “culture” within the dataset is in that of goal, in material/action/intention

processes. This illustrates the fact that it is presented as the object for proposed action(s). Most commonly, it is described as something which needs to be changed.

Table 1: Participant/ Circumstance Roles of “culture”:

Material action intention process	Material action supervision process	Relation intensive process	Relation possessive process	Relation circumstantial process	Verbalization processes	Mental perception process	Mental cognition process
GOAL 16	ACTOR 1	CARRIER 7	ATTRIBUTE 2	CIRCUMSTANCE 1	VERBIAGE 3	CIRCUMSTANCE 1	PHENOMEON 4
CIRCUMSTANCE 4		CIRCUMSTANCE 4		ATTRIBUTE 3		PHENOMENON 6	CIRCUMSTANCE 1
ACTOR 4		ATTRIBUTE 3					

Of the 60 processes involving “culture”, 25 (42%) were material processes, or processes of *doing*; 20 (33%) were relation processes, or processes of *being*; 12 (20%) were mental processes or processes of *sensing* and 3 (5%) were verbalization processes, or processes of *saying* (Simpson 1993: 89-91). In material processes, the most commonly occurring actor was the first person plural pronoun “we”. It is difficult to pinpoint the referent of this pronoun, even within the full context of the speech(es) and the final decision about its referent (if we feel a final decision is needed) is often a result of intuition.

“With the welfare budget ballooning over the last few years, **we** need to shift the culture which underpins demand” (Appendix 1: 526-527)

There is ambiguity of naming here as “we” could be interpreted as referring to any combination of the speaker, plus any one or more of a) the people who are part of this “culture”; b) his colleagues in

government who will assist in the reforms which lead to the “shift”; c) local government and services; d) charity groups, and e) the wider British public, all of whom may have a part to play in this “shifting” of culture. It is only when we are analysing speech in this way that these uncertain or changing relationships between lexical units and their real-world referents become obvious. While it may seem that such use of this pronoun without pinning down to what exactly it refers is an innocuous feature of the language which does not pose too great a barrier to understanding, it is worth noting that this feature can be used as a strategy to provide speakers with cover as they make assertions, demands or promises without being required to identify to by, or of whom exactly these are being made. The frequency of “we” as actor in material processes (and as carrier in relation processes) alongside the frequency of occurrences in which we find this difficulty of pinpointing the exact intended referent, has the cumulative effect of a general sense of togetherness: a shared sense of ownership and responsibility. By examining the grammatical roles of the participants in this way, we can see that there is often a lack of assignment of responsibility to particular participants and, when there is, that participant tends to either be inanimate, like the benefit system itself, or named in such a way that it is difficult to know who they are exactly. “Culture” itself was the next most frequent actor, and the most commonly occurring goal. With this ambiguous “we” as actor, “culture” as the most common goal, and the verb “to change” as the most commonly occurring process, this represents a central theme in the dataset: that we exist within a culture in need of alteration and that the responsibility to bring this about is shared. Determiners were mostly definite and demonstrative articles “the” and “this”, presupposing a certain, agreed upon concept (*this* culture that *we* must change).

Cultural

“Cultural” occurs 37 times in the dataset and, in 36 of these instances, the adjective is functioning as premodifier to a head noun in a noun phrase or prepositional phrase, and once as the head of a

postmodifying adjective phrase. Below is a selection of 10 of the 37 concordance extracts, selected to show its typical usages:

- Some of the most difficult challenges will be **cultural** though (*ibid*: 198)
- I have covered what I call external **cultural** change, change in society at large (*ibid*: 4512; 5426)
- ...not political and technocratic welfare reform, but internal and external **cultural** change.
(*ibid*: 4251-4252)
- To achieve this journey requires an internal and external **cultural** change (*ibid*: 5879)
- But we must also achieve an internal **cultural** shift, changing the **culture** of government spending (*ibid*: 5427)
- This is not just welfare reform, rather **cultural** change (*ibid*: 5401)
- It is about encouraging a **cultural** shift in how local authorities and government at large deliver services (*ibid*: 6239-6240)
- Part of social justice is about extending this **cultural** shift across the whole of Government
(*ibid*: 6310)
- The **cultural** pressure to conform to this lifestyle is enormous (*ibid*: 4445; 5345)
- This was the **cultural** challenge we faced – entrenched and intergenerational worklessness and welfare dependency. (*ibid*: 5343-5344)

Table 2 below provides an overview of the role of the adjective “cultural”, as a modifier to head nouns, throughout the dataset.

Table 2: Head nouns pre- and postmodified by “cultural”

Premodified head noun:	Number of Occurrences as head noun premodified by ‘cultural’:	Percentage of Occurrences of ‘cultural’ (out of 37):	Postmodified head noun:	Number of Occurrences as head noun postmodified by ‘cultural’:	Percentage of Occurrences of ‘cultural’ (out of 37):
change	20	54%	challenges	1	3%
shift	5	13.5%			
challenge	5	13.5%			
pressure	2	5%			
reform	2	5%			
issue	1	3%			
development	1	3%			

It is perhaps unsurprising that the adjective’s most frequent collocate in the dataset is the noun “change”, the verb form of which also represented the most common process in the transitivity analysis of “culture”. In making his argument that a cultural problem exists, the speaker is also calling for a solution to this, namely through “cultural change”:

“...not political and technocratic welfare reform, but internal and external **cultural change**. By this I mean **cultural change** both within society, and within government itself.”

“Shift”, “reform”, and “development” also carry a sense of change, which is repeated in the occurrences of “challenge” as head noun, premodified by “cultural”. Four of the 5 occurrences of that construction represent a pair of challenges in which “the first cultural challenge” is identified as being “external”, or lying in society (namely, a “culture of worklessness”) and the second refers to an “internal challenge”, to steer government away from its “culture obsessed by inputs”. So, the argument for where to place blame for the “unsustainable” welfare bill is, in places, represented as two-fold: an external “culture of worklessness” and an internal culture of government overspending. The acceptance of this two-fold construction of the problem leads to a neat summary: the government had been spending too much on benefits, and these had become “a way of life” for people receiving them (*ibid*: 6306). The solution, then, seems to follow: the government will make cuts to the amount it gives, and people will need to reacclimatise to a shifted culture of less “input”. However, it is worth noting that “the cultural challenge” also occurs, and is named as “entrenched and intergenerational worklessness and welfare dependency” (*ibid*: 5243-5244), without being paired with this second, governmental cultural challenge. If we were in any doubt as to what the speaker holds to be the cause of the “unsustainable” cost of the welfare bill, this is made explicit by this relation/intensive process with “culture” as carrier:

Carrier

Process

Attribute

“**This** entrenched **culture** of worklessness and dependency **is** not only **the source of soaring welfare bills...**” (*ibid*: 2205)

In other words, this “external culture” is the cause of these costs. The frequency of occurrences of the noun form “culture” as carrier in relation processes; and as actor in material processes, has the effect of shifting responsibility away from individuals or groups of individuals. While it is understood that it is people whose behaviour constitutes this “culture”, the speaker can avoid making direct reference to these people by placing the culture itself in the active (doing/ carrying) roles. This can very effectively mitigate the seriousness of what could be interpreted as quite controversial allegations or assertions about the behaviour of the people involved in these “cultures”.

Actor Process Goal/ Actor Process Goal

“[(the culture) that (allowed) [(people) (to avoid) (work)]]”

(*ibid*: 5384-5385)

Here, the speaker is saying that there *are* people who are/ have been avoiding work but he does so indirectly by foregrounding the agency of “the culture” and keeping the controversial component, the verb “avoid” in its infinitive form, making its usage seem more abstract, or less firmly attached to the noun phrase (people). “People” therefore, on the face of it, seem to carry less responsibility for this avoidance, than if it were tensed. The verb “avoid” carries a sense of intent. This is not a culture which made work difficult for people; it allowed them to shy away from it, as they are, according to folk behaviourism, (see chapter 3, section 3.2.7) naturally inclined to do, without proper punishments in place for this behaviour. Such usage of verbs and adjectives which carry a sense of intention is central to the overall picture being constructed in these speeches, where it seems that those who are not in work are, for the most part, in this situation through choice. Regularly collocating with both “culture” and “worklessness” are the adjectives “entrenched” and “ingrained”, which relate to habits or ideas rather than circumstances: things that people can, with enough effort, control. Another attributive adjective

attached to “worklessness” in the dataset, although only once, is “endemic” which is striking. Its sense strengthens this idea of something found only among certain people, in certain areas but also, because of its common usage in the context of disease, brings with it an additional sense: one of danger, of infection. Indeed, the definition of “endemic” is “(of a disease or condition) regularly found among particular people or in a certain area”. This strengthens the idea that something has to be done about this “ingrained” and “endemic” condition, not only for the good of those who live in the affected areas but because those outside of these areas may also be in danger from it. This suggestion is evoked in another speech when Duncan Smith says, in the context of the 2011 riots, that “containment is not an option anymore” (Appendix 1: 2550). Also in speaking of the riots, he states in a speech delivered in September 2011 “...last month the inner city finally came to call, and the country was horrified by what it saw” (*ibid*: 2082), strengthening the idea that social problems are confined to specific geographical locations and that the rest of the country is in danger from those within these areas. This is a powerful evocation of the in- versus out-group construction I will be examining in more detail in chapter 5, section 5.6.1. For our purposes in this chapter, it was enough to realise that social problems are being presented as peculiar (for now) to geographical areas where they are being temporarily contained, and that the welfare state itself is presented as having played a role in the 2011 riots. The suggestion is indicative of Duncan Smith’s belief in folk behaviourism:

“By focussing on income levels rather than life chances we have created pockets of our society where too many know only of money which is given, rather than earned, and so were too easily prepared to go out and take on the night of the riots.” (Appendix 1: 2990-2992)

This is a controversial assertion to make about people based on their socioeconomic circumstances and it is not expounded in this or any other speech within the dataset. The assertion is simply made as if it were fact: as if looting is a natural or logical progression from claiming benefits.

4.3.2 Arguing for an Intergenerational Decision Not to Work: The “Salient Exemplar”

“Intergenerational” is also one of the most common collocates for both nouns which further enhances the idea that the problem is “cultural”, as cultures are systems of habits, beliefs, ideas and customs which tend to be passed down through generations. The search term “*generation*” was used with AntConc, which yielded 58 results, 22 of which being examples of this claim that worklessness is a culture passed down through generations. The following two examples are intended to illustrate how the word is typically used in such occurrences:

- “We are going to be dealing with people who have come from families where no-one has ever worked – **generation** upon **generation**” (*ibid*: 2248-2249)
- “This was the cultural challenge we faced – entrenched and **intergenerational** worklessness and welfare dependency.” (X2 *ibid*: 4280-4281; 5243-5344)
- “There are swathes of young people who have seen their whole family – and many in their wider community – go for **generations** without sustaining anybody in work” (*ibid*: 1699-1700)

Use of the noun “swathes” here suggests huge numbers of people in this situation, and “generation upon generation” indicates that there are families in which parents, grandparents, and even great-grandparents have never worked. In reaction to these assertions, groups of academics in sociology as well as economics have recently attempted to find figures for families that fit this description and have so far unanimously reported that the numbers are “infinitesimal” (Gaffney online 2012).

“Evidence from the Labour Force Survey, from which most of the labour market statistics come, suggests that of all households with two or more generations of working age co-residing (which

make up 1 in 5 of all UK households), only 0.3% or 15,000 households are in a position where both generations have never worked. In around a third of these households the younger generation has only been out of full time education for less than 1 year... There are very few families who never work across generations.” (Gregg & MacMillan Online 2012)

Duncan Smith has therefore taken a phenomenon which is occurring in Britain in numbers which are relatively small in the context of its population, and presented it as a problem so prevalent that it necessitates these major reforms of the welfare state. This is a rhetorical device Lakoff calls the “salient exemplar” (Lakoff 1996: 372) and is a frequent feature of these speeches. It is a feature I would describe as going beyond exaggeration, to hyperbole. But it is a persistent and very effective strategy in building a picture of communities (geographical confinement adding to the concept of culture) in which it is not only “the norm” (Appendix 1: 493-494) not to work, but where there is “cultural pressure” to avoid working. Furthermore, Duncan Smith suggests that these communities are places where not “everyone understands the intrinsic benefits of work” (Appendix 1: 4434).

- “Thus, after generations in key communities, worklessness has become **ingrained** into everyday life.” (*ibid*: 4444)
- “The **cultural** pressure to conform with this lifestyle is enormous, underscored by the easy perception that taking a job is a mug’s game.” (*ibid*: 4445-4446)

It is unclear what form this “pressure” takes. It may be as simple as the fear of being seen as a “mug” but while this “easy perception” is named, it is again unclear whose perception this is, and how exactly the speaker is aware that it is in fact the perception of these people. The occurrence of perception, as well as other mental processes in the dataset, represents a speaker-strategy in which Duncan Smith

appears to afford us a unique insight into the minds of those who are involved in this “culture of worklessness”. In describing these processes, the speaker adopts a kind of omniscient narrator voice, affording us an insight into the rationale behind “the decision not to work” (*ibid*: 712). Below are examples of mental/perception processes through which he seeks to provide insight into “the decision not to work”:

Circumstance **Senser** **Process** **Phenomenon**

- At present, **the poorest** in our society **see** little reason to take the risk of finding a job and losing their benefits.

Circumstance **Senser** **Process** **Phenomenon**

- Under the present benefit system, **the less well-off** don’t always **see** work as the obvious choice

Senser **Process** **Phenomenon**

- **your friends and neighbours** who **see** no reason to work

Circumstance **Senser** **Process** **Phenomenon**

- Under the current benefit system, too often **people do not see** work as the obvious choice.

While the above are all mental/perception processes, they stand metaphorically for processes of cognition, in which a situation is being understood and a decision being consciously made.

Linked nouns: “unwilling” and “unable”

The above idea that not working is a conscious decision is further supported through the occurrence of verb, adjective and noun phrases which carry the sense of intent and/ or choice, as we saw above in the case of “avoid”.

- “the **decision** not to work, or remain on limited hours, seems rational” (*ibid*: 712)
- “Large numbers were on out of work benefits, yet many were **unwilling** or unable to take advantage of the job opportunities being created” (*ibid*: 5251-5252)

“Unwilling” and “unable” are two very different adjectives carrying importantly distinct meanings but they appear inextricably linked in the dataset and there is no attempt by the speaker to separate these from each other. The above sentence appears 3 times in the dataset, as well as:

- “Too many people **unable** or **unwilling** to take the work that is on offer” (*ibid*: 1257)

Because the use of the definite article as a determiner in noun phrases creates presupposition, the use of the definite article with “work” here strengthens the idea that there *is* work available, to those who want it, but does not take into account the complexity of the kinds of work that are available or the range of circumstances of those in need of it. This is indicative of the kind of oversimplification that is discussed more fully in chapter 5. When two lexical units are strongly collocated in this way it has the effect of inextricably linking together the concepts or real-world referents to which they refer, in the minds of the audience. In this case, the people to whom these adjectives apply begin to function as one unit, representing those who are unable to work as the same as those who are unwilling.

Linked nouns: “Fraud” and “error”

This strategy is also employed with the speaker’s treatment of the nouns “fraud” and “error” throughout the dataset. The actions to which these nouns refer are something which Duncan Smith reports costs the DWP £5 billion each year. This is an important factor in the overall argument for welfare reform and, yet, he does not attempt to give them the individual treatment they would seem to warrant. “Fraud” appears 8 times in the dataset. One of these occurrences is in reference to “living together fraud” (*ibid*: 1365) and not linked to any indication of cost, with the remainder being recurring instances of identical structures: first, the noun phrase “fraud” then “error”, linked by the coordinating conjunction “and”. It is of note that the two appear always in this order, making them, in the context of these speeches, a kind of temporary irreversible binomial pair. There is some evidence to suggest that, often, what is considered to be the more significant member of a binomial pair will occupy first position. A joint study by Bunin Benor and Levy (2006) found, in its corpus study of 692 binomials, that perception-based markedness played a role in ordering. This meant that the perceived salience or importance of one of the nouns would lead to its normally occupying first position within the pair. Some examples given include:

1. north and south (north is the orienting direction on a compass)
2. mother and dad (mother is usually more central to the child’s upbringing)
3. day and night (humans usually spend more waking hours during the day)
4. see and hear, seen and felt (seeing is a more salient form of perception)
5. oranges and grapefruit, salt and pepper (the former is generally more common)
6. family and friends (family is more central)

With this in mind, always having “fraud” first could be seen to be foregrounding that noun and the crime to which it refers, and having the effect of suggesting that this carries more of the responsibility for the cost.

4.3.3 Workless/ worklessness

“Worklessness” occurs 31 times in the dataset. Two of these occurrences, it should be noted, consist simply of the word “worklessness” alone, functioning as sub-heading within the transcripts. So, while the remainder of the discussion focuses on 29 occurrences of the noun “worklessness”, we are aware that there are, in fact, two further, “disembodied” instances. Below is a selection of 5 of the 29 occurrences, chosen to demonstrate the common ways in which the term is used:

- “From this starting point, the team refined the work into five pathways to poverty – family breakdown, educational failure, addiction, debt, and the fifth, **worklessness** and economic dependency” (Appendix 1: 23-25)
- “...so many people are living in ghettos of **worklessness**, without any real sense of aspiration.” (*ibid*: 672-673)
- “Yet the true price of welfare dependency is paid by the individual, their families and their children who are trapped in a cycle of inter-generational **worklessness** and poverty” (*ibid*: 71-572)
- “Get someone in to work in an area where **worklessness** is endemic and you have created a role model” (*ibid*: 3203-3204)
- “So this was the first cultural challenge we faced – entrenched and intergenerational **worklessness** and welfare dependency” (*ibid*: 4280-4281. My emphasis)

Regular collocates:

Nouns: culture; ghettos; pockets; communities; generations.

Adjectives: Attributive: inter-generational; intergenerational; entrenched; entrenched and intergenerational. **Predicative:** endemic; ingrained; entrenched.

The first concordance extract given above represents a common structure, with “worklessness” listed alongside these 4 other noun phrases, as “what drives poverty”. The noun appears in this list of “pathways to” or “drivers of” poverty, 7 times within the speeches. The above example is our first introduction to these “five pathways” and it is very interesting that “worklessness” does not appear alone as one of the five drivers here. In fact, in the context of these “pathways”, “worklessness” appears as a single-word noun phrase only once in the dataset, and once as a noun phrase premodified by the adjective “intergenerational” also once. In its initial introduction, the fifth driver of poverty is called “worklessness *and* economic dependency” (my emphasis) and we find that the noun tends to be inextricably linked to this and other noun phrases throughout, increasing the difficulty of the task of pinpointing the meaning of “worklessness” in the overall context of these speeches. The noun phrases “worklessness” and “welfare dependency” joined by the coordinating conjunction “and”, is a structure which appears 6 times in the dataset. Each time the two are referred to as a unified concept, suggesting mutual entailment. Intuitively, there is no objective mutual entailment between these two nouns and they may occupy quite distinct conceptual fields. It is certainly possible to imagine an out-of-work individual who does not depend on the state for financial assistance: a lottery winner or someone born into a wealthy family, for example. However, as we saw above, the claiming of some form of state benefit is a criterion of the “workless” category, so the difference here is one of discourse domain. In political discourse, an individual, even if they do not or have never worked, would not fall under the

“workless” category unless they are claiming some form of state benefit. This is an interesting point, given the evaluative negativity of the term “workless(ness)”. It suggests then that this negativity comes not from a lack of input into the labour market as the analytic meaning of “workless” would appear to describe, but from the act of receiving from the welfare state. An important point here however, is that while in this discourse domain, “worklessness” does entail “welfare dependency”, it does not follow that “welfare dependency” entails “worklessness”. There are large numbers of people who depend on the state for economic support, but are also in work. Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Child Benefit are the most common examples of welfare payments received by those who are not in a “workless” situation but do depend on state benefits to make ends meet.

“The number of housing benefit claimants in Great Britain increased by 300,000 to 4.95 million between January 2010 and December 2011.

Of those 300,000, 93 per cent (279,000) were households where at least one adult was employed.” (Brown online 2012)

It is interesting then, that “worklessness” and “welfare dependency” should be more than mere collocates in the speeches, but actually named as one entity, representing a “pathway to” or “driver of” poverty/ disadvantage. Below is a description of how “worklessness” appears in the dataset, in this particular context:

4.3.4 “Worklessness” as a “driver” of poverty/ disadvantage

It is significant that “worklessness” is named as a pathway to poverty, and very interesting that it is named by itself only once in this context. In that instance, there is no mention of “welfare-” or

“economic dependency” and, similarly, where we see occurrences of the five “drivers” listed without “worklessness”, “welfare dependency” stands invariably alone, as if representing both. Unless there is no meaning of one that cannot be conveyed by the other, it would seem necessary to list them as separate entities and increase the list to six “pathways to poverty”. As this is not the case, the effect is indeed a suggestion of mutual entailment. Below are the seven concordance extracts in which “worklessness” is found listed in this way. Note that these do not have to be explicitly introduced as “the five pathways to/ drivers of poverty”; I have simply extracted all examples containing the four other, unchanging ‘drivers’.

- “From this starting point, the team refined the work into five pathways to poverty – family breakdown, educational failure, addiction, debt, and the fifth, **worklessness** and economic dependency.” (Appendix 1: 23-25)
- “Because we can only get to grips with the underlying problems by tackling the pathways into poverty:
 - **worklessness** and welfare dependency
 - debt
 - addiction
 - educational failure
 - and family breakdown.” (*ibid*: 917-923)

- “People who suffer high levels of family breakdown, educational failure, personal debt, addiction – and at the heart of all of this is intergenerational **worklessness**. (*ibid*: 1012-1013)
- What is critical is that we tackle the ‘pathways to poverty’:
- Family breakdown
- Educational failure
- Debt
- Addiction
- And **worklessness** linked to welfare dependency” (*ibid*: 3125-3130)
- “Whether it be **worklessness** and welfare dependency... addiction... educational failure ... debt ... or family breakdown...” (*ibid*: 5071-5072)
- “Whether it be **worklessness** and welfare dependency, addiction, educational failure, debt, or family breakdown...” (*ibid*: 5531-5532)
- “First, prioritising early intervention, preventing the root causes of disadvantage – whether it be family breakdown, educational failure, **worklessness**, addiction, or crime” (*ibid*: 6205-6206)

Table 3 below provides an overview of how “worklessness” appears throughout the dataset, as one of the root causes or drivers of poverty:

Table 3: The occurrence of “worklessness” as a “pathway to poverty”/ “root cause of disadvantage”

Phrase	Number of Occurrences
worklessness and economic dependency	1
worklessness and welfare dependency	3
intergenerational worklessness	1
worklessness linked to welfare dependency	1
worklessness	1

Let us consider the above utterance: “...and worklessness linked to welfare dependency”. “Linked to” does not suggest the same inextricability as the repeated grammatical linking we have previously seen. That is to say, the joining of “worklessness” to another noun phrase like “welfare dependency” with the coordinating conjunction “and”, and the explicit labelling of them as *one* of five drivers of British poverty, would suggest a far closer relationship than does “linked to”. There is something unexpected about this sudden admission that the two are separate concepts, but it is not expounded and it does not seem to hold up in the face of the rest of the dataset where Duncan Smith continues in his suggestion that the two concepts entail one another. In the final extract, above, we see the only example of “worklessness” as a single noun phrase in this context and, tellingly, “welfare dependency” is not listed. This further supports the idea that the two concepts are taken to be so inextricably linked that the conceptual field evoked by the mention of one is identical, or so close to that evoked by the mention of the other, that only one is needed. I would argue that this is untrue. Even though, in the domain-specific

discourse of politics, being “workless” entails being economically dependent, being economically dependent does not necessarily entail being “workless”, or even unemployed.

The inextricability of “worklessness” from “welfare dependency” is further demonstrated by occurrences of the five drivers of poverty, but without “worklessness”. Presumably, we are not intended to infer that “worklessness” is no longer considered to be among these drivers. This, then, illustrates that the concept of “worklessness” is being presented as entailed by “welfare dependency”. There are two such occurrences in the dataset:

“We know there are many other challenges we have to face up to as well as welfare dependency:

- educational failure
- debt
- family breakdown, and
- drug and alcohol addiction” (Appendix 1: 789-793)

“Debt was one of the pathways to poverty identified when I was at the Centre for Social Justice – alongside addiction, educational failure, family breakdown and welfare dependency.” (*ibid*: 1795-1796)

It is also worth noting that, as we are introduced to these drivers, we are not afforded, here or in the course of this dataset, any insight into how it was decided that these are the five drivers of poverty. They are introduced thus:

“From this starting point, the team refined the work into five pathways to poverty – family breakdown, educational failure, addiction, debt, and the fifth, worklessness and economic dependency.

This, it was agreed, was what drives poverty.” (*ibid*: 23-26)

From this, it is unclear whether the team divided the work into these five pathways because they had, through some previous unseen research, already arrived at the conclusion that these were indeed the drivers of poverty, or if they agreed that these were the drivers of poverty because they had divided their work into five corresponding “pathways”. My own feeling, from the dataset as a whole, is that they have named these to correspond, in their view, to William Beveridge’s five “Giant Evils” of “Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness”. I return to the speaker’s repeated references to Beveridge in more detail in chapter 5, section 5.4.1.

4.3.5 Dependency

There are 25 examples of “dependency” in this benefits context, without either of its premodifying nouns “welfare” or “economic”. This suggests that our prior knowledge of the noun’s usage in the speeches is expected to lead us to interpret “dependency” as “welfare/ economic dependency”. Given that this move from the modified noun phrase to the single-word noun phrase happens often within the duration of relatively short instances of public speaking, this suggests a high degree of speaker confidence that his linking of the two together has been successful to the point where the modifying noun is no longer required. It seems to me that this may lead to some ambiguity, especially where the kind of dependency is not specified:

“Interest at these rates can cause an ever-increasing spiral of debt, **dependency** and despair.”

(*ibid*: 1814)

Here, it seems logical that the dependency referred to is dependency on private loans with high interest rates, and the suggestion seems to be that this can lead to eventual welfare dependency. Given that the speech in which this utterance occurs begins, as do many, with the speaker describing the five “pathways to poverty”, one of which is “addiction”, and that “dependency” is a word very commonly associated with and occurring as a collocate of “addiction” in medical, media and everyday discourse, some audience members could make this conceptual connection here. Indeed, on occasions where the speaker is talking about both drug and alcohol problems and the benefits system, the use of the noun “dependency” in this context with no modifiers can be particularly ambiguous:

“Just take the example of a poor family where the parents are suffering from a drug **addiction**.

Giving the parents extra money moves them over the line and out of “poverty” on paper.

Yet because much of the money will almost certainly go on drugs, the family still lives in poverty.

Coming off drugs is a therefore a vital step for them getting out of poverty and staying there.

Or take a family where no one has ever worked. Simply increasing the household’s income –

while taking no other proactive action – will only push the family further into **dependency** and

weaken the incentive to take up work.” (*ibid*: 5045-5051)

Here, the “dependency” referred to is almost certainly “welfare dependency” but its being used in such proximity to examples of drug and alcohol addiction has the potential to result in an overlap of the conceptual fields evoked: those of financial hardship and physical addiction, with “dependency” acting as a bridge between the two. This close association between “welfare dependency” and addiction is made clearest by one example in which “dependency” is premodified by the noun “drug”. This is a

familiar structure but, here, it is acting as an analogy which may be interpreted as revealing something important and controversial about what is being said about reliance on state benefits:

“You don’t cure drug **dependency** by parking addicts on methadone.

You don’t help someone who’s ill by writing them off on benefits and forgetting about them.”

(*ibid*: 6184-6185)

The structure and placement of these two statements together triggers a comparison in the mind of the text-consumer.

“Every parallelism sets up a relationship of equivalence between two or more elements...Interpreting the parallelism involves appreciating some external connection between these elements. The connection is, broadly speaking, a connection either of similarity or of contrast.” (Leech 1969: 67)

The parallelism here is in the structure of the introductory phrases of these two assertions. Repeated use of the generalised second-person personal singular pronoun “you” followed by the almost identical verb phrases “don’t cure” and “don’t help”, with the two main verbs carrying the same sense of aiding, sets these assertions up to be closely conceptually linked in the minds of the hearer. Indeed, people who suffer “drug dependency” are generally considered to be “ill” so the overlap is quite readily accepted, but how valid is it? “Curing” drug addicts is the job of health professionals, rather than cabinet ministers, so this “you” in fact refers to people in very different roles, in very different discourse communities. The discourse domains therefore, as well as the conceptual fields, are further apart than they are presented as being. The parallelisms in the opening structure of the two assertions also lead to the expectation of parallelisms in the remaining structures. This has the effect of a suggestion of similarity between

“methadone” and “benefits”. The impact of this is a blending of the conceptual fields evoked so that both those with a physical, and those with a financial dependency, are treated very similarly.

The use of “dependency” is evaluatively negative throughout the dataset, with the repeated message that “everyone in the welfare system should be on a journey – it should be taking them somewhere, helping them move from dependence to independence” (Appendix 1: 4412-4413). This conceptual metaphor THE BENEFITS SYSTEM IS A VEHICLE (excluding the context of pensions) appears 24 times in the dataset with just one utterance suggesting that the journey to be made in this vehicle is only expected of people “where they are able” (*ibid*: 5866). The repeated use of the collective pronoun “everyone” coupled with the rarity of utterances which address the fact that there are people in the benefits system who will never be able to work, strengthens this idea that the majority of people depending on that system do not *have* to. The representation of the benefits system as a metaphorical vehicle plays on a very familiar and accepted conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY (Ungerer & Schmid 1996: 120).

4.3.6 Transitivity of Sentences Containing “Worklessness”

The sub-heading “entrenched worklessness” is not included in this analysis as it does not appear within a clause and therefore has no participant role. The remaining 28 occurrences are accounted for in the table below with some explanations and examples following. Table 4 below provides an overview of the transitivity roles of “worklessness” throughout the dataset.

Table 4: Participant roles/ occurrence in circumstances, of “worklessness”.

Material action intention process	Material action supervention process	Relation intensive process	Relation circumstantial process	Mental perception process
CIRCUMSTANCE 5	GOAL 2	CIRCUMSTANCE 2	ATTRIBUTE 1	CIRCUMSTANCE 1
GOAL 10	CIRCUMSTANCE 1	CARRIER 5	CARRIER 1	

To keep all analysis within the Simpson framework of transitivity, where actors were “living” or “growing up”, these were treated as states of *being* as opposed to states of doing and so were categorised as relation processes rather than material/action/supervention processes. For example:

“...so many people are living in ghettos of worklessness, without any real sense of aspiration”
(Appendix 1: 672-673)

This is categorised as a relation/circumstantial process in which “people” is the carrier, “are living” is the process; one simply of being; “in ghettos of worklessness” is the attribute, and “without any real sense of aspiration” constitutes the circumstance.

“Thus, after generations in key communities **worklessness** has become ingrained into everyday life.” (*ibid*: 4444; 5344)

This is a relation intensive process, which describes a state of being. The noun phrase “worklessness” is the carrier, the verb phrase “has become” is the process, the adjective phrase “ingrained” is the attribute and the prepositional phrases “into everyday life”, “after generations” and “in key communities”, as we may expect, all form the circumstance of the process. It is sometimes useful to rewrite a clause in order to ascertain which process type best suits it and it is not uncommon to find that a verb phrase consisting of auxiliary and main verb, such as the one above (“has become”) can be rewritten as “is”, making it all the clearer that this is indeed a description of a state of being.

Of the 28 processes involving “worklessness”, 18 (64%) were material processes; 9 (32%) were relation processes and 1 (4%) was a mental process. Actors were often omitted, and others include the generalized second-person pronoun “you”, noun phrases referring to third-person actors “the individual”, “children”, “their families”, and the inanimate “system” itself. “The welfare system” and “the benefits system” both appear in the role of actor in material/action/intention processes in which they are said to have “created” “ghettos-” and “pockets of worklessness” respectively. The impact of this has been discussed above i.e. that it shifts blame for negative situations onto the system rather than, at least explicitly, the people who rely upon it.

Goals were most often noun phrases postmodified by subordinating prepositional phrases in which “worklessness” functioned as head noun: ghettos/ pockets of worklessness/ a culture of worklessness and dependency. Of the 18 material processes in which “worklessness” occurred, the noun itself was either the goal, or was postmodifying the goal noun in over 55% of occurrences (10).

- Over a number of years, the welfare system – well intentioned as it has been – has created ghettos of **worklessness** where generations have grown up without hope or aspiration

(*ibid*: 555-556)

- Yet today, the benefits system has created pockets of **worklessness** across the country where idleness is institutionalised (*ibid*: 564-565)

The last example here is categorised as a material/action/intention process in which the noun phrase “the benefits system” is actor, the verb phrase “has created” is the process, the noun phrase and subordinating prepositional phrase “pockets of **worklessness**” together form the goal and the remainder of the clause provides the circumstance in which the process takes place.

4.3.7 Transitivity of Sentences Containing “Workless”

The adjective “workless” occurs 19 times in the dataset and each time, the adjective is functioning as premodifier to a head noun in a noun phrase or prepositional phrase. Below is a selection of five of the 19 concordance extracts:

- Britain has one of the highest rates of **workless** households in Europe (Appendix 1: 667)
- And almost 2 million children growing up in **workless** households (*ibid*: 4279)
- You can find **workless** blackspots across the country (*ibid*: 482)
- and a higher proportion of children grow up in **workless** households than in any other European country – some 2 million (*ibid*: 553-554)
- the likelihood of being in relative poverty declined 1.5 times faster for children living in **workless** families than for children living in families where somebody worked. (*ibid*: 2924-3925)

Table 5, below, provides an overview of the four head nouns of which the adjective “workless” functions as premodifier throughout the dataset.

Table 5: Head nouns premodified by “workless”.

Head noun:	Number of Occurrences as head noun premodified by “workless”	Percentage of Occurrences of “workless” (out of 19):
household	13	68%
families	4	21%
homes	1	5.5%
blackspots	1	5.5%

4.3.8 The Constructed Equation of “household” and “families” and the Constructed Opposition of “working” and “workless”

It is worth noting that both “household” and “families” appear twice more than the above figures, in the concordance study. On each of these occasions, the noun appears twice in the clause, once representing a “workless” situation and once representing a situation in which at least one person in the family or household is in work.

- “it will save government huge amounts down the line, as workless **households** become working **households.**” (Appendix 1: 4456-4457)

- “from 1998 to 2009/10 the likelihood of being in relative poverty declined 1.5 times faster for children living in workless **families** than for children living in **families** where somebody worked.”
(*ibid*: 2924-3925)

This is done in the first example above by the use of almost identical noun phrases forming parallel structures, the only difference between them being the premodifying adjectives “workless” and “working” respectively. These are linked by a verb phrase (“become”), expressing a transformational process from the negative to positive. The comparisons present in both instances are made all the more striking by the repetition of not only the head noun but of phrase type, both main noun phrases in the first example, and prepositional and subordinating prepositional phrases in the second. The individual phrases are extracted below for clarity:

- (workless households)/ (working households)
- (in workless families)/ (in families (where (somebody) (worked)))

The similarities between these phrases is striking and effective in their aiding of the construction of complementary opposites, creating a comparison between what could be seen as two opposite kinds of household and family respectively: working and workless.

There is a juxtaposition of two identical head nouns within parallel structures (phrases), modified by what could be said to be the negative adjective form of the noun “work” and positive/ affirmative adjective form of the verb “(to) work”, respectively.

“In each case there is a repeated framework, one positive and one negative which indicates an opposition” (Jeffries 2010: 39).

Working and workless therefore become temporary opposites in this context. In this instance, it may be somewhat uncontroversial to represent “working households” and “workless households” as opposites. In the context of economics or statistics, there is nothing unusual about separating households along these lines. What is interesting, in the wider context of the discussion around “worklessness” and of this dataset in particular, is the effect of this repeated separation of British households in this way, coupled with other recurring representations of the widespread, *cultural* nature of “worklessness”, on the text-consumer’s overall picture of present-day Britain. For example, Duncan Smith repeatedly speaks about those households to which Housing Benefit is paid as if it is understood that they are workless. In fact, 93% of new Housing Benefit applications in 2012 came from people in employment. Housing Benefit appears, only once, as distinct from out-of-work benefits:

“And by unifying out-of-work benefits, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits into a simplified single Universal Credit, we will end the risk and fear associated with moving in and out of work.”
(Appendix 1: 1063-1064)

The fact that a large number of Housing Benefit recipients are in work is not only absent in this dataset, the language used to discuss this benefit actually suggests that it *is* an out-of-work benefit. Below are examples of extracts for “Housing Benefit” which illustrate this:

- “Since 2000, private sector **Housing Benefit** awards have grown by between 70% and 80%... ... So taxpayers are increasingly seeing people on benefits living in houses they couldn’t hope to afford themselves” (*ibid*: 1220-1225)
- “Is it right that young people should be able to move directly from school to a life on **housing benefit**, without finding a job first...” (*ibid*: 6038-6039)

- “The scale of these payments has meant that **Housing Benefit** has become a disincentive to move into work for those receiving it.” (*ibid*: 399-400)
- “Just take the changes we are making to cap **Housing Benefit**. Research published this month shows that of those **Housing Benefit** claimants affected, a third said they would be looking for a job in future.” (*ibid*: 5418-5419)

The final example here is particularly misleading. If one third of those affected said they will be looking for a job in future, this suggests that everyone affected is currently out of work, which is simply untrue. Furthermore, the statement “... So taxpayers are increasingly seeing people on benefits living in houses they couldn’t hope to afford themselves” (*ibid*: 1220-1225) is an illustration of an important, recurring feature of these speeches which is fully examined in chapter 5. That is, *the representation of benefits recipients and taxpayers as belonging to two distinct, mutually exclusive groups*.

Another interesting result of the analysis of the role of “workless” is its premodification of “households” and “families” in similar structures which carry seemingly synonymous meanings.

- “And almost 2 million children growing up in **workless** households” (Appendix 1: 4279)
- “...and almost 2 million children were growing up in **workless** families” (*ibid*: 5343-5245)
- “...and 2 million children living in **workless** families” (*ibid*: 5753)
- “...and the 1.9 million children living in **workless** homes” (*ibid*: 665)

It is unclear from the context whether “home” is to be taken to mean the same as “household”, but this repetition of almost identical figures, framed in almost identical prepositional phrases relating first to “households” then to “families” and finally “homes”, strongly suggests that the terms are being used

interchangeably. This is something which the United Nations Statistics Division states should not be done:

“From the definitions of "household" and "family", it is clear that household and family are different concepts that cannot be used interchangeably in the same census.” (United Nations Statistics online)

The impact on the audience, of these terms being used interchangeably is, again, one that has its roots in the difference of discourse domain. It may be that the speaker is accustomed to using these terms interchangeably and it may well be that many or even most households with children consist of just one family. However, using them interchangeably obfuscates the fact that households can contain only one working-age occupant, while speakers in everyday conversation may tend to conceptualise a family as most often being larger, consisting of many members and not necessarily being confined to one household. So, when the audience hears

“If you are dealing with someone from a family where no one has ever held work...”
(Appendix 1: 4437)

they could be forgiven for assuming this is a reference to a unit consisting of more than one working-age adult, underscored by the use of the indefinite pronoun “no one”, which although singular, carries the connotation that there is a group of *at least* two people of whom *not one* has ever held work and it is not a pronoun we would normally use when the group of potential referents consists of just one individual.

In 74% of occurrences of “workless” (14/19), it is premodifying the head noun of a Prepositional Phrase, subordinating a main Noun Phrase. For example:

- (“one (of the highest rates (of workless households (in Europe))))).
- (“the highest number (of children)) (living) (in workless households (in Europe))

The frequency with which “workless” occurs in prepositional phrases and, in transitivity terms, constitutes part of the circumstance of various processes, suggests that it is indeed being used most often to describe households or situations rather than individuals. That is to say, it does not *directly* or explicitly modify individuals - 2012 figures show that over 70% of households labelled “workless” in fact contain only one working-age occupant, and just under half of those are the only occupant (Office of National Statistics online).

4.4 Conclusions

The main features of the construction of the picture of “cultural worklessness” in this dataset, which become strategies for convincing the audience that this picture is accurate, include:

- The inextricable linking of noun phrases which may arguably belong together in political discourse but, due to the differences in their usage in other discourse domains, may be easily misinterpreted
- The constructed equation and opposition of non-conventionally opposite or synonymous terms, playing on differences of discourse domain.
- Inanimate systems in actor/ carrier role to detract from controversial assertions about people’s behaviour.
- Exaggeration, realised through the “salient exemplar” rhetorical device.
- Invalid argument, not fully expounded and based on a Strict Father moral framework:

Benefits = something for nothing; stealing = something for nothing, ergo: causal link or close relationship between receiving benefits and looting during the 2011 riots.

- Mental processes, as well as various lexical items carrying a sense of choice, to persuade the hearer that benefits recipients have decided not to work.

This chapter has laid out how these strategies are identified using the methodologies described and sought to explain how the results have been interpreted to reveal the underlying speaker stance towards the welfare state and those who are dependent upon it. This is a right-wing ideology, as expounded in the following chapter, which judges dependency of any kind as weakness, and seeks to use the rare, worst examples of behaviour to persuade the majority to consent to massive reform of the welfare state. In doing this, this chapter has addressed its own research questions which in turn are related to the main research questions of the thesis:

- 1) What is the meaning of “worklessness” in the context of these speeches? (Related to main research question 3)

This chapter has explained that “worklessness” is not a synonym for “unemployment” in these speeches, as it had been used in academic works previously but, rather, can be applied to people in a range of circumstance, some of which mean that the person may never be in a position to seek work. This fact is not only overlooked, but “worklessness” itself is presented as being a matter of choice - a choice made through generations until it has become cultural.

- 2) What is the impact of this? (Related to main research questions 2 & 4)

This chapter has sought to explain that this oversimplified presentation of people in a “workless” situation and also of the presentation of “workless” and “on benefits” as mutually entailed, is

misleading and denies the true complexity of many people's situations, importantly overlooking the fact that a large number of people on benefits are also in work. The potential impact of this is that hearers are left with a confusing and inaccurate picture of how the system which is under reform actually works in reality, and is therefore not best placed to judge whether or not these reforms are necessary or justified. The familiar conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A JOURNEY is employed to bolster the speaker's representation of the system, and extended to include THE BENEFITS SYSTEM IS A VEHICLE. This again ignores the complexity of situations in which people within that system find themselves and has a potentially very powerful impact on the text-consumer who may be left with the impression that those who are not travelling in this vehicle (i.e moving from dependency to independence) are not in fact making the journey of life. This will again strengthen the idea that something must change to enable those individuals to change this and to "get moving" in their lives. It can be argued that the "journey" one takes in life may be taken while remaining dependent on support. It is, as will be further demonstrated in the following chapter, the conservative, Strict Father worldview which assumes that this is not possible.

Chapter 5

Firm but Fair?

The Government in Parental Role

5.1 The Family Model

In chapter 3, I argued that Lakoff is correct when he claims that the metaphorical conceptualisation of the nation as a family is almost universal, and that to keep family-based morality out of democratic politics is impossible (Lakoff 1996: 325). In this chapter, I expound my argument that the family model to which Duncan Smith most closely adheres is that of the Strict Father: the model on which conservative politics is centred. Despite the occurrence, throughout these speeches, of language which could seem at first glance to allude to a more liberal, Nurturant Parent model, I argue that the core arguments for the legislative changes contained within the Welfare Reform Act emerge directly from the Strict Father model. In particular, these come from a belief in the high priority of its most central metaphor of MORALITY IS STRENGTH, its accompanying assumptions about human nature, and the resulting emphasis this places on reward and punishment. Lakoff's (1996) political metaphor theory framework will be heavily referred to throughout this chapter and the other theoretical frameworks drawn on, alongside the methodologies described above. This chapter will thereby seek to address the first three main research questions in some detail:

- 1) What political ideologies are present and on what conceptual metaphor systems are these political ideologies based?
- 2) What are the advantages and dangers of widespread acceptance of these metaphor systems?

3) How are these metaphors and underlying ideologies realised through the vocabulary, grammar and syntax of these political speeches?

As was briefly discussed in chapter 3, there are two main models of family morality to which the majority of Western people prescribe, and political ideologies can be metaphorically mapped: the Strict Father model, and the Nurturant Parent model. These were introduced in chapter 3 where I explained that the models are central, prototypical models and that it is not my claim that Duncan Smith, the coalition, or even the Conservative party is an “ideal” Strict Father, arguably for pragmatic reasons. However, it is my suggestion that the reforms contained within the Welfare Reform Act, and the arguments in support of these put forward in this dataset, come from a decidedly Strict Father framework. The Strict Father model is described in some detail in Lakoff (1996) and, here I give an overview and detail the most central metaphors at which I look closely in this chapter. Lakoff describes the Strict Father framework as follows:

“The model posits a traditional nuclear family, with the father having primary responsibility for supporting and protecting the family as well as the authority to set overall policy, to set strict rules for the behaviour of children, and to enforce the rules...

...Children must respect and obey their parents; by doing so they build character, that is, self-discipline and self-reliance. Love and nurturance are, of course, a vital part of family life but can never outweigh parental authority, which is itself an expression of nurturance- tough love...

...Children must never be coddled, lest they become spoiled; a spoiled child will be dependent for life and will not learn proper morals” (Lakoff 1996: 33)

“...Once children mature, they are on their own and must depend on their acquired self-

discipline to survive. Their self-reliance gives them authority over their own destinies, and parents do not meddle in their lives.” (*ibid*: 66)

For comparison, here is a brief overview of the Nurturant Parent model:

“Love, empathy and nurturance are primary, and children become responsible, self-disciplined and self-reliant through being cared for, respected and caring for others...

...The obedience of children comes out of their love and respect for their parents and not out of the fear of punishment...

When children are respected, nurtured, and communicated with from birth they gradually enter into a lifetime relationship of mutual respect, communication, and caring with their parents.”

(*ibid*: 33-34)

It is important to remember that both models share goals, for example self-reliance, but that the means by which these are to be achieved are very different (through obedience in the Strict Father model and through empathy and cooperation in the Nurturant Parent model). The degree to which these are expected to be achieved also varies:

“The mature children of the Strict Father have to sink or swim by themselves. They are on their own and have to prove their responsibility and self-reliance”. (*ibid*: 66)

In the Strict Father model therefore, the parent expects to step back and let the child be completely independent whereas in the Nurturant Parent model it is expected that some degree of mutual care will

continue even as the child achieves relative independence.

5.1.1 The Central Metaphor MORALITY IS STRENGTH and the Role of Competition

Importantly, the metaphors which make up the two family models are present in each. What differs, resulting consequently in very different political frameworks, is the *priority* given to each of these metaphors. MORALITY IS STRENGTH is the central metaphor in the Strict Father model and I believe that much of the language within this dataset is illustrative of a strong presence of this moral framework. The metaphor's components are:

- Being Good is Being Upright
- Being Bad is Being Low
- Doing Evil is Falling
- Evil is a Force (either internal or external)
- Morality is Strength

As this central MORALITY IS STRENGTH metaphor is present within both models and is indeed familiar across discourse domains, it can often go unnoticed and speakers are unlikely to be aware of their own usage varying from that of another language user with a different political worldview. However, the frequency, in this dataset, of references to people as being “at the top [of society]” and “at the bottom [of society]” is striking. The phrase “bottom of society” appears nine times and there are a further 13 mentions of “the bottom” in which this same meaning can be understood.

“-enabling those previously stuck at **the bottom** to play a productive role in society.”

(Appendix 1: 5524)

This is an example of constructed mutual exclusivity that I call “temporal exclusion”. It is a flawed suggestion that one cannot occupy any two particular states of being at one time. Here, the contrast of states of being suggested by “enabling those **previously....to...**” sets up an opposition between being “at the bottom” and playing “a productive role”. As with so many situations, it is clear that the top and the bottom are demarcated along economic lines:

“...at the top end of society, we find some of our most successful and well rewarded professionals pouring – rightly – their skills into wealth creation...” (*ibid*: 3291-3292)

Those “at the bottom” may be some of the most treasured and invaluable members of society, to their families and friends or their communities. These individuals may be providing much-needed support to their families and neighbours, in a variety of capacities but, as they are not generating wealth, they are deemed unproductive. While, as we saw in chapter 4, the economic factors in people’s standards of living are backgrounded in favour of a foregrounding of their values, especially work ethic, there is a consistent link between the social positions of the people discussed in these speeches, and their economic background. When Duncan Smith says, therefore:

“The gap between the top and bottom of society is in many cases larger than it has ever been...”
(X 4 *ibid*: 6397; 4020; 4762; 6128)

“...At the same time, these wealth creators can have a dramatic effect on the communities themselves – showing those at the bottom that they have an opportunity to turn their own lives around and move up the social ladder” (X 2 *ibid*: 6406-6409; 6137-6319)

he is indeed arguing for a sharing of *values*, namely work ethic. He is suggesting that those at the “top” could, by example, help those at the “bottom” to discover ways to improve their own lives. The labelling

Page | 92

of top and bottom is done purely along economic lines and we are expected to infer this difference in values, by the fact that those “at the bottom” can be “shown” how to improve, implying it is already within their power to do so.

In my own usage, this directional metaphor would tend to refer to levels of success in areas of competition: “at the top of her field”, “at the bottom of the league”, for example. Even in areas like “the housing ladder”, one can conceive of being at the top or bottom as it is, in a sense, an area of competition. One’s place in society, however, is not something I would easily conceptualise in these terms, as society is an all-encompassing concept. It is a concept covering each of the individual competitive fields of which one may be at the top or bottom, but also covering social life and interpersonal relationships with family, friends and neighbours, one’s “performance” in which, I would argue, cannot be measured in economic terms. The term “bottom of society” appears only three times in the British National Corpus: twice in political documents, and once in the description of a film. Perhaps, as a politician, Duncan Smith is used to a discourse domain in which the term is more readily applied to this all-encompassing concept of society itself. It seems that, when viewed in the light of a Strict Father framework, it is the importance of competition which makes this term so natural to him and so relatively frequently occurring:

“[In the Strict Father Model] the world must be and must remain a competitive place. Without competition, there is no source of reward for self-discipline, no motivation to become the right kind of person. If competition were removed, self-discipline would cease and people would cease to develop and use their talents... Competition therefore is moral; it is a condition for the development and sustenance of the right kind of person. Correspondingly, constraints on completion are immoral...” (Lakoff 1996: 69)

Competition is so important in this worldview that society itself is viewed in this light and one's place within it may be labelled as it would be on a league table. In the Nurturant Parent model, on the other hand, it is cooperation, rather than competition, which leads one to a "successful" place in society.

5.2 Incentivising Work and Making it Pay: the Presence of Folk Behaviourism in the Dataset

The belief in folk behaviourism leads to a belief in the morality of reward and punishment. The idea that the application of rewards and punishments can change a person's behaviour is very prominent within the Strict Father model and it is apparent throughout this dataset that Duncan Smith believes in this. Using the search term *incentiv* with the concordance software, we see that this occurs 56 times in the dataset.

There are 8 occurrences of this in verb form, "(dis)incentivise". In transitivity terms, the occurrence of this verb in the process role within a material process demonstrates that belief in folk behaviourism. As we saw in chapter 4, Duncan Smith believes that "whole communities" and "generation upon generation" of people do not understand the intrinsic benefits of work, and the fact that he believes they can be "incentivised" to change their behaviour, despite this lack of understanding, demonstrates this belief in Folk Behaviourism, and in the power of reward and punishment. Furthermore, these processes illustrate an interesting and very much Strict Father feature of these speeches discussed in chapter 3, section 3.3, that is, the argument that it is the responsibility of the welfare system, rather than of the labour market to "incentivise" work and to "make work pay".

- "So our current benefits system is actually disincentivising people from work."

(Appendix 1: 107)

- "first – the benefits system can disincentivise people from taking a job," (*ibid*: 707)

- “This approach will create a fairer, more dynamic system that supports work incentives and makes sure that work pays. (*ibid*: 735-736)
- “Reforming the benefits system so that it actually incentivises work” (*ibid*: 760)
- “This is what I mean by dynamic reform – creating a welfare culture that incentivises work and promotes independence over dependency” (*ibid*: 5421-5422)

The concept of incentives and disincentives itself is a complex one, but that complexity is not addressed within this dataset. Rather, the effectiveness of these kinds of “incentives” to work, and to employ, is presented as being obvious. “It is clear that people respond to incentives and disincentives” (*ibid*: 2130). Even for those who would strongly agree with this statement in principle, there is room for debate around *how* people respond and whether their short-term response can be shown to have the desired impact over the longer-term. As the University of San Diego’s Chair in Behavioural Economics and Professor of Economics & Strategy, Uri Gneezy observes:

“Monetary incentives have two kinds of effects: the standard direct price effect, which makes the incentivized behaviour more attractive, and an indirect psychological effect. In some cases, the psychological effect works in an opposite direction to the price effect and can crowd out the incentivized behaviour” (Gneezy 2011: 192)

This has implications both for incentives designed to encourage people to take up work, and for those offered to employers and employment agencies to encourage them to take on long-term unemployed or “hardest to help” individuals such as those with disabilities. A 2013 BBC documentary investigating the role of companies in the Department for Work and Pensions’ Work Programme found that individuals in this “hardest to help” category were being “parked” on the books of employment

agencies. In this programme, Linda Smith, who worked for one such agency, Triage, said that under the scheme firms can earn more money from taking on disabled people as clients, but that once they are on the company's books staff are told to spend as little time as possible helping them find work (The Independent Online 28.01.13):

"They would be put on telephone interviews... just to make sure that there was this contact made so they could tick a box to say, 'Yeah, they're still on the Work Programme'" (*ibid*)

This is one example of how complex, and difficult to assess, financial incentives, and people's responses to them, can be. On paper, it may seem that this money "incentivised" the employment agency to take on and assist clients from the "hardest to help" category. But according to this and, according to the BBC at least four other former employees, it was incentivised merely to add their names to their books, while offering no real help to get them into employment.

5.3 The Frequency of Seemingly Nurturant Parent Language

The relatively frequent occurrence of Nurturant Parent language and metaphor in these speeches is not to be denied. It is my view that this, rather than indicating an adherence by the speaker to a Nurturant Parent moral framework, is present for the following reasons:

- Although Iain Duncan Smith is a Conservative Cabinet Minister, the present government is a coalition with the Liberal Democrat party. The Conservatives do not have a majority government and this must surely be kept in mind, especially when effecting such radical changes as contained within the Welfare Reform Act.

- The welfare state is beloved, and widely supported. The reforms being brought in at present constitute a radical reduction of the welfare state, and could even be a precursor to its eventual dismantlement. Therefore, it is not surprising that the language employed to argue for these reforms is designed to appeal to those who would be most inclined to resist them. Lakoff argues that conservatives have long been much more aware of the language of their own worldview and the power of persuasion it has, than have liberals. I would therefore suggest also that they are quite aware of Liberal language, and are adept at employing it to their own ends. It is the aim of much of this chapter to demonstrate both how some of what is being said is intrinsically liberal at first glance but that, upon further examination, is being misrepresented in order to propagate ideas which are in fact very much conservative at their core.

In arguing that Duncan Smith is implementing and arguing for these reforms, from a Strict Father moral framework, it is crucial to address the occurrence of Nurturant Parent language in the dataset which could appear, at first, to undermine this argument. As stated above, I believe that this language is chosen quite deliberately due to its familiarity and appeal to those with a Liberal, Nurturant Parent worldview who would be most inclined to oppose the reforms to the welfare state. In this section, I will examine the most compellingly Nurturant Parent language and demonstrate the ways in which it is in fact undermined, contradicted or overruled by the Strict Father metaphors which lie at the very heart of all that is being argued for in these speeches.

“Concepts like “class” and “social and economic forces” and “social and economic imprisonment” fit naturally into a liberal worldview... The metaphorical Nurturant Parent - the government - has a duty to help change the social and economic system that traps people. By this logic, the problem is in the society, not in the people innocently “trapped”. If social and

economic forces are responsible, then other social and economic forces must be brought to bear to break the “trap.” This whole picture is simply inconsistent with Strict Father morality and the conservative worldview it defines...

...The logic of conservatism locates so-called “social” problems within people, not within society. For this reason, it would make no sense to conservatives to use class and social forces as forms of explanation and justification for social policy...

..Because explanations for success or failure give priority to Moral Strength and Moral Essence, explanations in terms of social forces and class make no sense. They are only seen as excuses for lack of talent, laziness, or some other form of moral weakness.” (Lakoff 1996: 202-204)

This is an argument which, on the face of it, seems to undermine what I have claimed about this dataset, as Duncan Smith mentions this “trap” repeatedly and does seem to concede the existence of social forces which contribute to it. However, I would argue that, far from being an external social or economic force by which people are “innocently trapped”, the trap in Duncan Smith’s speeches is indeed one that comes from “in the people”; it is an imprisonment of their own making. To an extent, he seems to concede the existence of a social force behind this trap, but he calls it “cultural” - a laziness which has been passed down from generation to generation (see chapter 4). So, yes, he sees people as being trapped, which may seem an inherently liberal viewpoint, but the nature of this trap is very different from the liberal view. This is a highly effective strategy in which Duncan Smith seems to give a nod of agreement to liberals. It may be thought of in terms of his saying something like “yes, there exists a trap in which many poor people exist, and we are here to help them escape it.” But what is slightly less explicit, and yet very strongly depicted in the dataset, is the *nature* of this trap. People are in a trap, according to this Strict Father worldview, because of their own behaviour and the nature of the help

required for this escape, then, is also very different from the liberal view of “help”. In this framework, if the government is to help people escape a trap of their own making, it must also apply means to change the behaviours which trapped them in the first place. The repeated suggestion is that behaviours may be changed by application of reward and punishment. This comes very much from a Strict Father worldview. Indeed, the issue of class and economic forces is consistently backgrounded and even denied throughout the dataset. As we saw in chapter 4, areas of economic deprivation were presented as being occupied by people with values fundamentally different from those in wealthy areas, suggesting that it was a lack of work ethic, not jobs; a lack of understanding of the value of work, not the existence of wages so low one cannot make ends meet with them, which were presented as being responsible for “worklessness” which in itself was argued for as a cultural, rather than economic problem.

For someone looking at these speeches from a Nurturant Parent worldview, it seems odd that it should be the responsibility of the welfare system, rather than the labour market, to “make work pay” and, yet, Duncan Smith repeats this idea of making work pay in exactly that way. As we saw in chapter 3, the phrase appears 28 times in the dataset, each time in the context that it is the benefits system that should allow this to happen. While many may agree that a person should not find themselves worse off financially in work than they would be, were they out of work and relying solely on benefits, for someone with a Nurturant Parent worldview, it would seem obvious that, if this is the case, then wages must be too low and should be increased. This is not a concern which is addressed at any point throughout this dataset. Rather, the solution to “making work pay” is a decidedly Strict Father one, which ensures that the benefits system provisions will be so low as to mean being in work, even on a very low pay scale, will always pay more. This has three important implications:

1. It speaks to the Strict Father belief in folk behaviourism
2. It speaks to the Strict Father high priority of protecting the free market
3. It ignores the well-being of those who are unable to work

These implications are discussed below:

1. As Lakoff says:

“The Strict Father model presupposes a folk theory of human behaviour [he calls] ‘folk behaviourism’:

People, left to their own devices, tend simply to satisfy their desires. But, people will make themselves do things they don’t want to do in order to get rewards; they will refrain from doing things they do want to do in order to avoid punishment.

This is used in the Strict Father model on the assumption that punishment for violating strict moral rules and praise for following them will result in the child’s learning to obey those rules.

The entire Strict Father model is based on the further assumption that the exercise of authority is itself moral; it is moral to reward obedience and punish disobedience... this most basic assumption [is] the Morality of Reward and Punishment.” (Lakoff 1996: 67)

This leads to the question “what constitutes reward, and what constitutes punishment?” As we saw earlier, the measuring of the effectiveness of incentives is complex and, as Lakoff points out, what may effectively reward or punish and “incentivise” one person, may not work in the same way for another. In politics, and especially conservative politics, rewards and punishments are defined, with the exception

of course of imprisonment, along strictly economic lines. This is why, while liberals view it as only fair that those who are able to contribute more to help those who are struggling do so, conservatives view this as a form of punishment. It is effectively punishing people for “doing the right thing” and is therefore morally wrong, according to the Morality of Reward and Punishment.

“Taking money away is conceptualized as harm, financial harm; that is the metaphorical basis for seeing taxation as punishment...

...Taxation of the rich is, to conservatives, punishment for doing what is right and succeeding at it. It is a violation of the Morality of Reward and Punishment...

...Liberals, of course, see taxation through very different lenses. In Nurturant Parent Morality, the well-being of all children matters equally. Those children who need less care, the mature and healthy children, simply have a duty to help care for those who need more, say, younger or infirm children.” (*ibid*: 189-190)

Of course, this too then leads to a dilemma for conservatives in which providing welfare payments is seen as “rewarding” and thereby reinforcing negative behaviour (not working). This is why the circumstances under which it is seen as “right” to give such help are very narrowly defined in these speeches and presented as rarely occurring (see chapter 4). It is in the description of these circumstances that we find a further occurrence of seemingly Nurturant Parent language, where Duncan Smith speaks of unconditional support. Unconditional support is something very much associated with Nurturant Parent morality. However, as I will elaborate on below, this does not translate to the political domain. In Nurturant Parent households, children are helped and supported because that is the right thing for their parents to do, and they do not have to measure up to any strict criteria in order to receive

the help they need. In Strict Father families, on the other hand, the children are expected to become self-reliant and so may find this support withdrawn as its conditionality increases. This can mean that, the more self-reliant the child becomes, the more willing the parent would be to help, when asked, although they would be required to do so less frequently. This is in line with the conservative political model in which government offers tax breaks to the wealthy as a form of reward for success. This seems counterintuitive to Nurturant Parents who feel those who are able to should contribute more for the sake of their weaker “siblings”.

“If people genuinely cannot work, then we will make sure they get the unconditional support they need” (Appendix 1: 139-140)

This statement is paradoxical. It begins with an “if” condition and then concludes with a statement about unconditional support. In reality, it is the case that citizens must meet certain conditions in order to receive support. There is no such thing as “unconditional” in the welfare state, and there is no “unconditional support” contained within the Welfare Reform Act. This is perhaps uncontroversial in itself. The welfare state is a system of cooperation after all and there are criteria, in both models, by which the distribution and degrees of support are decided. Even in a far Left version of the Nurturant Parent model, such criteria would still apply, it would simply be the methods by which they are tested and the degree to which support is subsequently provided or withdrawn which would vary. The term, therefore, does not belong to politics at all but, rather, to the family domain. Its use by a politician has the effect of representing him, and his party, as being in a role rather like that of a caring parent. It plays on this tendency to metaphorically map from the familial domain onto that of the political. Furthermore, the use of the adverbial “genuinely” subtly reminds us of the allegedly high numbers of people whose claims to be unable to work are not genuine.

2. That it should be considered the job of the welfare system to make work pay speaks to the Strict Father high priority of protecting the free market. As Lakoff explains:

“If the poor are selling their labor to the rich, then it is the labor market and the labor market alone that determines what that labor is worth. Labor, in this metaphor, is a commodity like any other commodity and its value is not inherent but determined by what people are willing to pay in exchange for it. The Morality of Reward and Punishment, which requires that all markets be free markets, demands this.” (Lakoff 1996: 67)

It is the fact that, within the Strict Father model, restrictions on competition are immoral, which means that the government merely “encourages” employers to offer employees better wages (and pensions schemes), above the legal minimum. It will not *demand* this, as would a government following a Nurturant Parent model, in order to protect the rights of its dependents.

3. If it is true that anyone who is not working should always be financially worse off than someone who is in work, and it is also true that rewards and punishments come in financial forms, this leads to a situation in which those who are unable to work due to illness or disability are effectively being punished for being ill or disabled. A great difficulty which comes into play here is the reliance on a controversial assessment of people’s ability to work, and the fact that the suggestion throughout the dataset has been, as we saw in chapter 4, that many people receiving Incapacity Benefit had in fact been fit for work. This means then that the promise to make sure “work pays more than benefits” (Appendix 1: 3530) amounts to a conscious effort to keep those unable to work on an income which is even lower than the minimum wage.

The central difficulty here is that, for Strict Father moralists, weakness *should* be corrected, through reward and punishment. But I, in line with the Nurturant Parent framework, argue that some forms of “weakness” cannot be corrected by these or any other means and should certainly not be punished, as

Page | 103

the people exhibiting these “weaknesses” do so through no fault of their own and will suffer as a result of the application of such punishments.

5.3.1 Occurrences of key liberal terms

As Lakoff states:

“Liberals talk about: social forces, social responsibility, free expression, human rights, equal rights, concern, care, help, health, safety, nutrition, basic human dignity, oppression, diversity, deprivation, alienation, big corporations, corporate welfare, ecology, ecosystem, biodiversity, pollution, and so on. Conservatives tend not to dwell on these topics, or to use these words as part of their normal political discourse.” (Lakoff 1996: 30-31)

Of the above mentioned 22 Liberal terms, nine appear in the dataset and what follows is a discussion of these occurrences. Interestingly, not only does the term “social force(s)” not occur anywhere in these speeches, “force” occurs as a noun only five times. In three of these occurrences, it is in the label of a government “Task Force”. The fact that 100% of these occurrences of “Task Force” are in reference to a Children and Families Task Force (Appendix 1: 894; 971; 1405), is illustrative of the importance, to this government, of a “traditional” family structure which is in itself a typically Strict Father priority. This is not to suggest that Nurturant Parent models do not also support such families, but the form a family takes is of less importance than the happiness of its members, whereas in Strict Father Morality, marriage is seen as the key to that happiness. Duncan Smith refers to marriage as “this most fundamental institution” (*ibid*: 1276) and “our most basic and successful institution” (*ibid*: 1279) and, while he goes on to say that being pro-marriage does not entail that the government will fail to support

those who are not married, he does this in a way which is very telling of his government's view of those in an unmarried situation:

“Support for our most basic and successful institution does not mean that you cannot be sympathetic to and supportive of families where one parent is left with the difficult responsibility of bringing up the children.” (*ibid*: 1279-1281)

This seeming consideration for parents in all situations actually covers only two possibilities: married or lone parent. Note too, the passive construction of the circumstances of the latter parent type. The suggestion that a single parent “is left” to bring up their child(ren) seems to preclude the possibility that the parent may in fact have *chosen* to bring up their family alone. Of course, many in this situation may have wished to avoid it but it cannot be denied and should be acknowledged that, for others, being a single parent is in fact a matter of choice, and sometimes a positive one. The force of the above statement seems to be, however, that this government would not be “sympathetic to and supportive of” such a parent, and this is a characteristic of a Strict Father.

“Of course I recognise that relationships can break down for unavoidable reasons, and as a consequence there are lone parents all over the country doing the difficult job of bringing up children and often succeeding against the odds.

They are to be applauded and we should do what we can to help them in adversity.”

(*ibid*: 1307-1310)

To state that lone parent families “should” be “helped” is again something which speaks to a more Liberal worldview. Of course, “what we can” introduces a level of modality to this statement which protects the speaker from any degree of commitment. What a government “can” do to help is always open to debate, and what it “should” do, to interpretation very much dependent upon worldview. As of

2012, there were 2 million single parent families in the UK. Charities Poverty Alliance, Gingerbread and the Children's Society estimate that, if welfare reforms proceed as planned, 900,000 of those families will be worse off as they come into effect (Children's Society; Poverty Alliance online).

"Social responsibility" is mentioned only twice and, both times, it is in relation to businesses. One of these is a statement that businesses ought to participate in "social investment", and the other states that commercial banks ought to support the development of credit unions in order to help foster a stronger savings culture (Appendix 3181: 1848). It is stated throughout these speeches that pensions reforms will mean that those "who do the right thing in saving for their retirement" (*ibid*: 1568) should and, under these reforms, will be rewarded. This is another point on which holders of Nurturant Parent and Strict Father worldviews will simply fail to see the logic in each other's position. In the Nurturant Parent model, it is viewed as extra assistance, rather than reward. In that view, those who have been able to put money aside for their retirement are less in need of help than those who have not been able while, in the Strict Father model, it is about rewarding and reinforcing positive behaviours. That some people may simply be unable, for a whole host of reasons, to put any money aside for their retirement, is not taken into consideration and it becomes a matter of "something for nothing", again, being taken as self-evidently so, and unfair. These people have, through moral weakness, failed to do "the right thing" and to "reward" them, therefore, would be quite wrong. Moreover, Duncan Smith goes as far as to say that those who do not do the right thing in this respect are likely to make the choice not to work either. They are presented as belonging to that group in whom "idleness is ingrained", that we saw in chapter 4:

“Because under the pensions means test, hard-working people who try to save can find themselves retiring on the same income as their neighbour – someone who hasn’t saved at all but is eligible to claim for Pension Credit.

What kind of message does that send out?

It tells people on low incomes that it’s not worth saving – **it’s not even worth working**. Just sit back and wait for the government to pay out when you retire” (*ibid*: 4509-4510. My emphasis).

Again, Duncan Smith is demonstrating a strong belief in folk behaviourism: that people work and save *only* because they believe it will make them better off, i.e. financially *rewarded*, and have no understanding of the intrinsic worth of hard work and saving, or of providing for themselves and their families. This statement represents finding yourself on the same income as your neighbour, when you have saved and they have not, as equivalent to a financial loss, which is viewed as *punishment*. This is an inherently Strict Father view of the situation and depends upon the model of “fairness” held (Lakoff 1996: 60). In the Strict Father model, scalar distribution is seen as self-evidently fair and works alongside the concept of the Morality of Reward and Punishment. The more you work, the more you have a right to. In the Nurturant Parent model, need-based fairness is more prevalent; the more you need, the more you get. As there is less emphasis on what you should be doing in order to earn this, it is out of line with the Strict Father model and may again be seen as getting “something for nothing” which is morally wrong in that model. If we consider for a moment a far left model of fairness, the communist idea that it is fair that each person receives what they need, and contributes what they are able to, we can see that, in some left-wing models, it is considered perfectly fair that some people will work harder than others, for the same or even less “reward”. This makes no sense in the Strict Father model, where it would be feared that, wherever some people receive what they need in return for relatively little, others would look at this and decide to reduce their own contribution or even cease contributing all together.

Duncan Smith says that social investment should be more than “a part of [business’] corporate social responsibility agenda” and they should be helping help social investment “become the new venture capital” (*ibid*: 3181-3183). Encouragement of businesses to invest their capital in ways that benefit communities is something which has been increasing for a number of years, especially in the aftermath of the 2008 recession. While this may seem like a basically Liberal or Nurturant Parent priority, whether this is in fact the case is the subject of some debate, especially as social investment is a market in its own right and does not contribute to charitable associations. It is a capitalist concept, albeit a more socially responsible form. There is some concern, among charities, that as their funding is decreased and withdrawn and more attention is focussed on the social investment market, the focus within social projects will be more and more on the financial returns, and the idea of giving for no financial gain will be pushed further and further into the background. For example, Robbie Davison, chief executive of community interest company Can Cook, has accused Big Society Capital, the biggest social investor in the UK, of imposing a market-based ideology on the social investment sector. And he and others say that social investment intermediaries are “concentrated in a City-of-London bubble with no real understanding of the finance needs of the voluntary sector.” (Mair online 2013)

Another of Lakoff’s key liberal terms “concern” appears 6 times in the dataset, each time as a noun. Five of these occurrences are “my concern” and one is “the concern of the State”. This latter occurrence refers to the necessity of finding out how to intervene early in a person’s life to ensure they become self-reliant and “do not become the concern of the State for many years to come” (Appendix 1: 2943)

This emphasis on separation from the State comes from the Strict Father model in which people should become self-reliant and independent of the State. The greater the degree of independence, the greater the level of moral strength and the more successful the individual.

Four of the occurrences of “my concern” are in relation to the government having been “obsessed” with inputs, rather than outcomes (*ibid*: 6427). This is a repeated argument for a reduction in spending in which Duncan Smith seems to describe inputs and outcomes as being exclusive of each other, ignoring their relationship of mutual dependence (Jeffries 2010: 21).

“This is another legacy of focusing on inputs **rather than** outcomes.” (Appendix 1: 4136).

“...we are trying to change the whole culture of government so that we steer focus and spending **away from** inputs and symptoms and **towards** outcomes and root causes.” (*ibid*: 3942-3943).

“[Graham Allen] is someone who believes passionately in outcomes **not** inputs...” (*ibid*: 3617).

“... we must change the ethos of government, **from one** obsessed with inputs...

... **to one** concerned about outcomes...” (*ibid*: 6433-6434)

(My emphasis)

In these examples, concern with inputs and concern with outcomes are presented as being exclusive of each other. The suggestion seems to be that government has a choice of whether to focus on inputs (spending) *or* on outcomes. Of course, in the society we have, changes require spending, to some degree or another. It is difficult to imagine what outcomes or changes to the lives of individuals or communities could be achieved without spending. Radical reduction in public spending is exactly what is being justified in these speeches and, therefore, the representation of these as mutually exclusive is advantageous to the speaker. Many people, and especially those with Nurturant Parent worldview, would agree that the effect on the lives of citizens is what matters most. To construct an argument in which a focus on these effects *requires* a reduction in spending, serves to justify such cuts. Again, this is a flawed kind of reasoning resulting from the presentation of falsely dichotomous options. If the

problem was that government previously did not pay enough attention to outcomes, then the solution is to increase this attention. That they were also very focussed on inputs does not entail that a removal of focus from this area will solve the problem, nor does it follow that, in order to be more focussed on outcomes, the focus on inputs must cease. In this over-simplified construction, however, that seems to be the solution.

“Care” appears 12 times in the dataset, in the following contexts:

- To describe the importance of parents taking **care** of their own financial and care arrangements, following separation. This again speaks to the importance, to this government, of self-reliance.
- Listing social **care** as one of the ways in which older people continue to contribute to society, including the importance of
- Kinship **care**.
- To speak of the problems faced by children in **care** homes.
- To describe the rising costs of health and social **care**.
- To describe that government **care** should be focussed on outcomes, not inputs
- To discuss family life in poverty-stricken areas:

“...even on our most deprived estates there are large numbers of families who work hard, **care** about their children’s education” (Appendix 1: 2182-2813)

The last example here is quite striking in what it potentially reveals about the picture being constructed of these “deprived estates” and the people who occupy them. The use of “**even** on our most deprived estates” here suggests that we are expected to *be* surprised that lots of poor people work hard and care about their children’s education.

“Help” occurs 127 times. 65 % of these are in reference to the help people can expect, to become self-reliant.

“Health” occurs 22 times, most of which are in reference to government bodies/ services and costs.

“Safety” occurs four times and each time it is in reference to the welfare state as a “safety net”:

“Would it be one that fostered a society where people took responsibility for themselves and their families, and treated welfare as a temporary **safety** net in times of need...

...or one that conditioned people to grow dependent on state support, and treat it as a long-term crutch?” (X3 *ibid*: 4266-4269; 5269-5271; 5743-5746)

This question appears three times in the dataset which is interesting in two ways. First, in transitivity terms, it is another instance of the welfare system in actor role of a material process. We have seen this throughout the dataset and seen that it serves an important rhetorical purpose. It allows Duncan Smith to paint a negative picture of those who depend on welfare, without being seen to be blaming them directly for their negative circumstances. On the face of it, it appears that the blame is being assigned to the welfare system itself. However, when considered alongside other language used to describe these people; especially that which we discussed in detail in chapter 4, it becomes apparent that the welfare system was only able to “do” this because of the weak natures of the people concerned. This information, however is backgrounded when the system itself is placed in actor role. Second, it is another example of constructed mutual exclusivity. In offering a choice of two consequences of a welfare state, Duncan Smith is constructing a reality in which only one *or* the other can be the result. In other words, if there are people who have grown dependent on state support and treat welfare as a long-term crutch, this means that we do not have a society where people take responsibility for themselves and their families, using welfare only when they are in real need and only temporarily. The

truth is we have both in the UK today. Some people are dependent on welfare on a long-term basis. The majority of these people do so not because they have been “conditioned” to, but because their circumstances have rendered them unable to make ends meet without it. Of course, as has been previously discussed, there are some people who abuse the system, some who use welfare as a long-term crutch when they could be more independent. These numbers are relatively small, as we have seen in chapter 4. The existence of people who abuse the system does not entail that the system is to blame. A far greater number of people, the vast majority, do use it as it was intended. In fact, an argument could be made that it is not the citizens whose understanding and “treatment” of the system is questionable but, rather, the government’s, as I will discuss further, below, when looking at mentions of Sir William Beveridge in these speeches.

“Basic human dignity”, another of Lakoff’s key liberal terms, is not mentioned explicitly but there is just one occurrence of the word **dignity** in the dataset.

“It is about giving **dignity** back to some of the poorest people in our society, ending a situation where those who have the least pay the most.” (*ibid: 1869-1870*)

This statement is made in reference to Credit Unions. Duncan Smith has touched on the difficulty for low-income individuals to get any kind of loan and the problem of high interest pay day loan companies and loan sharks taking advantage of people in such a situation. Therefore, when he refers to poor people “paying the most” he is talking about interest rates. The less money you have, the less likely it is that you will be able to secure a low-interest rate loan; in fact you are much more likely to find that the only loan you can secure is one with an incredibly high interest rate. The development of credit unions is seen as a way to counter this situation and to help the poor who find themselves in it. In this sense, it is indeed giving dignity back to the poor, but is this a Nurturant Parent strategy? I would argue it is not, because the entire strategy has at its very core the protection of a free market and competition: a

decidedly Strict Father priority. A government built on a Nurturant Parent model may be more inclined to step in and limit the interest rates that loan companies are permitted to charge, especially in the knowledge that these companies actually target the poorest individuals; those who cannot secure loans elsewhere. From a Nurturant Parent viewpoint, this is exploitation but, from a Strict Father one, it is simply a consequence of competition. These companies are in a position to lend money, as a result of hard work and that should not be hindered or punished. They are wealth creators. Arguably, they create wealth only for themselves and are also wealth destroyers; making it impossible for the poor to build their own wealth. They are nevertheless undoubtedly creating wealth and that is valued very highly in this model.

The key liberal term “diversity” also occurs only once in the dataset. This was when Duncan Smith was speaking to the Institute of Grocery Distribution, in London, June 2012, about an upcoming jobs/ skills event at which he stated there would be “businesses showcasing the diversity of jobs available and giving young people an insight into the skills needed to succeed...” (*ibid*: 4959-4960)

The use of the definite article coupled with noun “diversity” itself; which evokes an instant image of plurality, serves to present a confident assertion that not only are there jobs available to those who seek them, but many different kinds of job: people have *choice*. The second part of this statement, I would argue, is quite telling of a Strict Father viewpoint. This is not because only this model views skills as an essential part of success, this is of course true in the Nurturant Parent model also, but because it constructs a picture in which these many jobs are available and these skills are all that is needed for success in securing one of them. Unfortunately, skill alone has not brought employment success to many in these last few years, as there have been fewer jobs available. In the year that this statement was made, an annual survey by recruitment site totaljobs.com found that, in the UK, there were an

average of 18 applicants for every available job, with this figure at 27 applicants per post and 36 applicants per post, in the catering and retail industries respectively (The Telegraph online 28.12.12).

“Deprivation” occurs five times. Two of these are identical occurrences of a description of “social deprivation”:

“Nationally, the evidence of social **deprivation** was clear to see:

- over 4 million people stuck on out of work benefits – many for a decade or more
- levels of family breakdown high and rising
- around a million children growing up with parents addicted to drugs or alcohol”

(Appendix 1: 4080-4083)

Four million people being on out of work benefits is not, objectively, evidence of social deprivation and yet it is number one on this list, in both occurrences. Although other social consequences may arise from being out of work, being unable to find work is an economic, rather than social, problem. However, the suggestion is that many, if not most of these people, did not find themselves in that situation because of a lack of jobs but because of their own “culture”. This is made clear elsewhere in the dataset, as we have seen. It seems that Duncan Smith is so confident in his success at arguing for worklessness as a cultural rather than economic problem that he believes listing the number of people on out of work benefits as the top indicator of *social* deprivation will be accepted as the natural thing to do.

Two occurrences of “deprivation” are within prepositional phrases postmodifying a noun phrase which refers to a geographic area, or community, while 1 occurrence refers to the deprivation as a spiralling force:

- “(pockets (of **deprivation**))” (*ibid*: 4050)
- “(pockets (of prosperity and **deprivation**))” (*ibid*: 1629)
- “Our reforms are about improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged – not changing people but restoring them.

Breaking the spirals of **deprivation**, and giving them the opportunity to take control of their own lives.” (*ibid*: 6147-6150)

“Spirals of derivation” is an interesting term and I believe that this is similar to the “cycles” of “welfare dependency”, poverty and “worklessness” which are referred to in other places throughout the dataset. (*ibid*: 37; 572; 574;623; 675; 914; 3870; 4102; 4357)

“Spiral” appears in this sense only once and, although I do believe it is related to the cyclical concept described in the above places, it also brings with it the idea of a problem increasing or intensifying, as was discussed in chapter 3. With each generational “cycle” the “spiral” intensifies. This helps to evoke the image of an external, powerful force; a twister or a whirlpool, which must be stopped before it destroys those in its path and this supports arguments for reform in that it creates a sense of urgency. The most interesting feature of this example is the claim that the reforms are “not [about] changing people but restoring them.” Restoration of course means returning to a previous state, but it is impossible to know if the people in question here have ever been in the state to which they are desired to return. What if some of these people have always been on welfare and therefore, as Duncan Smith himself would describe that state of being, never been in control of their own lives? How then can this be called restoration, or anything other than change? The claim that the reforms are not about trying to change people is superficially liberal, and creates an image of a much softer approach than is actually being taken by this government. It is evident in the dataset that the reforms are designed to change

people. Changing behaviours is a change to people; you cannot change a “culture” without changing something in the people who belong to that culture. And when the claim is that many of these people have found this “culture” passed down to them through generations, then this must surely mean that they have never been any other way and restoration makes no sense. This is another example of strategic use of liberal terminology which, upon closer analysis, can be shown to be incompatible with the legislation it is being used to describe, and is directly contradicted elsewhere in the dataset.

The adjective form “deprived” appears 12 times and in 100% of occurrences is used to describe geographic areas, rather than people. Even though Duncan Smith talks about the people who are in, or even “trapped” in those areas, using the adjective to describe the area, serves to put distance between the people themselves and the state of being deprived which is, after all, a very negative state to be in and not one that many people are comfortable acknowledging as a reality for many people in present-day Britain.

“In [the Strict Father] worldview, the class hierarchy is simply a ladder, there to be climbed by anybody with the talent and self-discipline to climb it...” (Lakoff 1996: 204)

We can see, in this dataset, that Duncan Smith does indeed hold this view. He speaks of a “ladder” on 7 occasions throughout these speeches: once he is referring to the “housing ladder” in which he assumes the inherent worth of owning property, itself a Strict Father value. The other 6 occurrences of the term are in the label “social ladder”. Similarly, there are 7 explicit mentions of the term “social mobility” and Duncan Smith makes it clear that this has central importance:

“The prize is a welfare system that is simple, more efficient and one that helps to restore the

Page | 116

social mobility that should be at the heart of British society” (Appendix 1: 215-216)

“Social mobility” is a complex concept and, on the face of it, can refer to an intricate network of factors, such as income (economic mobility), health and education. It seems that, in present-day Britain, social mobility and economic mobility are quite inextricable. Standards of living and standards of health have been shown time and again to be tied to income levels. (Economic and Social Research Council, online)

Education too, given that in England and Wales tertiary education is not free and its price is ever-increasing, must surely be linked to income levels. So, again, this mobility linked directly to the directional conceptual metaphor that BEING GOOD IS BEING UPRIGHT or moving upward, is economic at its core. Indeed, it is an economic pursuit that is presented as what ought to be “at the heart of British society”:

Premise 1: Being Good Is Being Upright.

Premise 2: Moving Up Is Improving Yourself.

Premise 3: Moving Up The Social Ladder Is Moving Up The Economic Ladder.

Conclusion: Becoming wealthier “should be at the heart of British society”

5.4 Support from Historical Social Reformers: the Emperor’s New Clothes Gambit Extended

5.4.1 Sir William Beveridge

When Duncan Smith brings in famously liberal historical figures into his arguments, this serves to lend credibility to his usage of the “Emperor’s new clothes gambit” in which he presents his arguments as

being “clear” and “obvious”, even to those with a more liberal worldview. To argue for the obviousness of the necessity of his party’s reforms, he invokes the ideologies of well-known and respected social reformers. After first establishing some general area of agreement, he then, by similar reasoning as we have seen above, constructs the implicature that this agreement then extends out to everything else that he is doing.

William Beveridge, one of the original architects of the welfare state, is mentioned 19 times in the dataset. Duncan Smith claims that his government “takes [its] lead from Beveridge” in making these changes (Appendix 1: 6024). The famous Beveridge report is selectively quoted from to suggest that Beveridge had been concerned that the benefits system would lead to such a negative state of society as Duncan Smith is now describing. The suggestion then is that he would have agreed that his beloved system must be radically changed, just as is being done.

“Over a number of years, the welfare system – well intentioned as it has been – has created ghettos of worklessness where generations have grown up without hope or aspiration.

This is exactly what William Beveridge warned against in 1942 when he wrote about his Five Giant Evils in society and listed “idleness” alongside want, disease, ignorance and squalor.

As he said in his Report:

‘The danger of providing benefits, which are both adequate in amount and indefinite in duration, is that men as creatures who adapt themselves to circumstances, may settle down to them.’

Beveridge set out to slay idleness and was very clear throughout his career that work plays a critical part in the process of alleviating poverty.

Yet today, the benefits system has created pockets of worklessness across the country where idleness is institutionalised.

I want to transform the system so that we can once again tackle this growing problem that Beveridge identified and we must slay.” (Appendix 1: 555-567)

This whole passage can be argued to be quite misleading. It illustrates how Duncan Smith subtly equates his government’s term “worklessness” to Beveridge’s “idleness”. This could be quite uncontroversial, if it were understood that the meaning of both terms is “unemployment”. However, as we saw in chapter 4, he goes to great lengths to argue for “worklessness” as a cultural, rather than economic, problem, while Beveridge’s “giant” of idleness referred, not to a state of being out of work through choice, but of a state of society in which opportunity of work for all was lacking. When Beveridge vowed to slay the giant of idleness, this represented a commitment by the Labour government of the day to maintain high levels of employment.

As the Open University online course on the welfare state explains:

“His report entitled ‘Social Insurance and Allied Services’ was compiled as the war was at its height (Beveridge, 1942). In it Beveridge set out a plan to put an end to what he called the ‘five giants’ – Want (today we would call it poverty), Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness **(unemployment)**”

(OU Online: 5. My emphasis)

Beveridge’s five giants are quoted by Duncan Smith 5 times in the dataset, with the giant of “idleness” being the only one which is then extracted and addressed individually. This, I believe, is an attempt to convince the audience that Sir William Beveridge agreed with one of the central and most controversial ideas being put forward in these speeches: that the major problem we face in terms of welfare is

something akin to laziness, as has come to be the primary referential meaning of “idleness” today. Today in Britain, “idle” is used almost exclusively, certainly outside of the political domain, to mean lazy or shiftless. Indeed, the OED’s first definition of the adjective is: “(of a person) avoiding work; lazy”. The speaker is exploiting this semantic shift to argue that this problem of shiftlessness has been persistent since the days of Beveridge. Although Beveridge did address the possibility of some people “settling down to” benefits, this does not equate to saying that the deliberate avoidance of work was one of society’s “five giants of evil”. Beveridge did indeed set out to slay “idleness”, by aspiring to a nation with full employment. Unemployment was Beveridge’s giant of idleness. Perhaps somewhat ironically, given the drive toward privatisation in Britain today, one major way in which this was striven for and achieved, was through nationalisation (Beveridge Foundation online).

“Yet today, the benefits system has created pockets of worklessness across the country where idleness is institutionalised.” (*ibid*: 564-565)

The key to understanding how “idleness” is used in the above lies in the adjective postmodifying it, “institutionalised”. “Unemployment” could not meaningfully be described as “institutionalised”, as “institutionalised” has the sense of having become so through a process of habit. Indeed, it is defined in the OED as “established (something, typically a practice or activity) as a convention or norm in an organization or culture”. So, here the speaker is saying that idleness is an established *practice* in certain communities. It is a convention, rather than circumstance.

I would argue that Beveridge warned of the danger of men “settling down” to benefits, in order to emphasise the importance of the contractual nature of the welfare state. In other words, citizens must understand that such payments are not designed to provide the costs of living, to those who are able to earn it in work. Rather, they are intended to provide temporary support when there is no work for you.

It is part of the government's contractual obligation, however, to ensure this state, when encountered, will be temporary, to ensure that there is opportunity of work for all. And not just work of any description, but work which pays enough to live on so that one may live independently of social security.

William Beveridge also wrote in his report:

"It is felt that this point cannot be over emphasised; any social security plans for the future **must**, if they are to succeed at all, **be based on a state of society in which there is possibility of work for all, and at an adequate wage.**" (Beveridge 1942. My emphasis)

The above gives an insight into this contract that Beveridge envisaged, which is not revealed in this dataset. Duncan Smith focuses on the responsibilities of citizens and skews Beveridge's warnings about what could happen as a result of the welfare contract not being met on *both* sides, and presents it as having been a warning about what Duncan Smith believes *is* happening as a result of the nature of the worker, left unchecked. This "skewing" strategy is also achieved in his use of the demonstrative "this" alongside the present continuous "growing problem" to describe something which he is claiming was identified in the 1940s. It creates the impression that the thing he is alleging to observe in the here and now is the same as that of which Beveridge wrote in 1942. It is unclear, in his usage, whether the claim is that Beveridge himself identified what was a growing problem then, or if it was identified as a potential problem then and a growing one now. The effect of the use of the present continuous to describe the nature of a "problem" identified in the 1940s is that one has the impression that this growth in the problem has been ever-increasing for over 70 years and, therefore, the management of it has become quite urgent.

"Under the previous Government employment rose by some 2.5 million, yet more than half of that was accounted for by foreign nationals...

Large numbers were on out of work benefits, yet many were unwilling or unable to take advantage of the job opportunities being created.

It became increasingly apparent that while we had a modern economy, transformed under Mrs Thatcher...

...**the nature of one section of society** was left lagging behind.” (Appendix 1: 4284-4295. My emphasis)

What Duncan Smith could mean by “the nature of one section of society” is very interesting. It links directly back to what we saw in chapter 4, section 4.3.1 and also in chapter 5. Section 5.4.1 when he spoke of cultural barriers to work and the suggestion that people actually choose not to work, lest they be “out of step” with their peers (*ibid*: 587; 715)

This again illustrates the Strict Father authoritarian mindset. His depiction of the welfare state seems very much to be of the government as authority figure, kindly handing out assistance to those who are deemed worthy – and withholding it from those who are not – out of “tough love”. What this picture fails to acknowledge is that the money in the social security system, money set aside to be given *to* the people, is money taken *from* the people. It is insurance, not just for one’s self or family but for the all members of society, should they need it.

The point made above about the majority of a rise in employment being made up of foreign nationals is repeated eight times in the dataset, almost identically each time. The fact that a large percentage of this rise was made up of “foreign nationals” is presented as proof that the “workforce at home” is unwilling to take up jobs when they are on offer. Britain is an EU member state. “Free movement of workers is a fundamental principle, enshrined in Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union” and one of the rights guaranteed by this is that of citizens to “enjoy equal treatment with nationals in

access to employment, working conditions and all other social and tax advantages” (European Commission Online)

The relevance of this fact and its power to demonstrate anything about the British workforce is therefore, to me, absent. Unless it is somehow the case that, when hiring, employers will always offer positions to “home” applicants first, this demonstrates nothing. Duncan Smith seems to offer up the fact that he is “referring to the low-skilled jobs” as evidence that, naturally, if there were British workers available then they would have been given these positions. This is simply untrue.

5.4.2 Robert Owen

Robert Owen is another influential historical figure whose, notably liberal, ideology is invoked by Duncan Smith and presented as having been in line with what he is trying to achieve through his legislative reforms. Given that he was invited to give a speech at the Robert Owen Institute, this is perhaps unsurprising, but it contributes to that strategy of referring to well-known liberal figures in what appears to be agreement, to support the fundamentally right-wing changes his government are making. This is achieved, just as with his use of Beveridge in this way, by careful selection and omission. Robert Owen was a social reformer who held the importance of education above all else. His famous experimental town, New Lanark, had the very first infant school in the world and so it is unsurprising to find that Owen spoke often and at great length about the importance of educating children. One of his central arguments for this was that it was demonstrably true that children will adopt the habits and beliefs of those by whom they are surrounded as they grow. So, while I do not argue that Duncan Smith is incorrect when he speaks of the importance of active involvement with children’s growth from a young age, asserting that Owen was saying we need “to stop young people falling out of the system”

(Appendix 1: 2168-2169) only works as evidence in support of his government's reforms if that system is one of which Owen would have approved. I would argue it is not. Robert Owen wished to radically change the structure of society and, although society is undoubtedly radically different today and some of Owen's ideas have been influential, it cannot be argued that society is now structured in the way he would have wished. Duncan Smith himself states that, in recent times, "income inequality rose to the highest level since records began" (Appendix 1: 3220-3221). Furthermore, Owen placed high importance on aesthetics, nature and art. These are very much in keeping with a Nurturant Parent model and are not priorities reflected in any of the speaker's reforms.

Indeed, that a Conservative MP should claim the support of one of the founders of Utopian Socialism is striking in itself. Again, this is an instance of that version of the Emperor's new clothes gambit in which Duncan Smith asserts that this great mind would have agreed with him and that his solutions are therefore "clearly" the right ones. He achieves this by establishing the grounds for a very basic or general agreement, in this instance that children should be engaged with from a young age, and extending this to imply that the agreement would have extended out to everything else he is doing.

5.5 Firm but Fair: The Depiction of Fairness

"This agenda is, I believe, a bold agenda. But we have **no choice**.

With the welfare budget ballooning over the last few years, we need to shift the culture which underpins demand." (Appendix 1: 525-527. My emphasis)

This statement summarises what chapter 4 was dedicated to illustrating: that it is this alleged "culture of worklessness" on which the necessity of the Welfare Reform Act is being posited. "We have no choice"

is indicative of the strength of THE NATION IS A FAMILY metaphor. As discussed above, there are other choices available to governments in order to save money and it is this presentation of a national budget as being like a household budget which ignores that fact. The targeting of welfare in particular seems naturally “fair” in the Strict Father model, where the majority of those relying on welfare are depicted as doing so through moral weakness. Of course any parent, or leader, believes that the actions they take are the right ones, that the decisions they make are the fairest. The important difference, as we shall see, is what is deemed “fair” by particular leaders.

5.5.1 Fairness

Using the concordance software, the search term “Fair*” yielded 29 results from the dataset. Fair, as an adjective describing the benefits system, occurs twice, and this is in the context of there being conditionality attached to benefits for people who are deemed able to work.

“At the same time, we will also make sure the system is **fair** by ensuring that receipt of benefits for those able to work is conditional on their willingness to work.” (Appendix 1: 135-136)

The concept of fairness to the taxpayer occurs 6 times.

“...it was a pledge to deliver **fairness** for those who fund the system: taxpayers” (*ibid*: 1002)

Reference to fairness to those receiving benefits, who have been depicted as belonging to a group distinct from “taxpayers”, does not explicitly occur, although when “fairness” occurs in a general context, I assume this is in relation to all people within British society.

Even though styles of leadership can be vastly different and based on entirely different models of family-based morality, the concept of fairness is always present and important. What leads to disparity between the realisations of fairness, is the models on which these are based. Lakoff lists 10 models of fairness:

1. Equality of distribution (one child, one cookie).
2. Equality of opportunity (one person, one raffle ticket).
3. Procedural distribution (playing by the rules determines what you get).
4. Rights based fairness (you get what you have a right to).
5. Need-based fairness (the more you need the more you have a right to).
6. Scalar distribution (the more you work, the more you get).
7. Contractual distribution (you get what you agree to).
8. Equal distribution of responsibility (we share the burden equally).
9. Scalar distribution of responsibility (the greater your abilities, the greater your responsibilities).
10. Equal distribution of power (one person, one vote). (Lakoff 1996: 60-61)

The issue is that while “conservatives and liberals agree that Moral Action Is Fair Distribution”, they “disagree strongly about what counts as fair distribution.” (*ibid*: 61-62) If conservatives’ interpretation of the fairness of procedural distribution involves the idea that not working is not playing by the rules, then any welfare provisions to the out-of-work, beyond the very short-term, will be seen as unfair in principle:

“...we will make work pay and support you, through the Work Programme, to find a job, but in return we expect you to cooperate.

That is why we are developing sanctions for those who refuse to play by the rules..." (Appendix 1: 1067-1070)

Important to this conceptualisation of playing by the rules, and in assessing who is and is not doing so, is again this idea that anyone who seriously looks for a job should be able to find one. The abovementioned "sanctions" are spoken of 4 times in the dataset. Alluding to the Strict Father adherence to the morality of reward and punishment, as well as indicating a belief that people, when left unsupported, will "sink or swim", is the severity of these sanctions.

"Those who can work but are unemployed will be expected to engage with us, treating their search for work as a full-time job.

If someone fails to do so without good reason, the commitment will also spell out the robust set of sanctions they face – losing their benefit for 3 months for the first offence, 6 months for the second and 3 years for the third." (*ibid*: 5997-6001)

It is not explained what would be considered a "good reason", but it is striking that a situation is described in which someone, reliant on benefits for survival, would have these taken away for such long periods of time yet there is no discussion of how that individual would survive. This is the morality of reward and punishment in action. The individual in question has not had the moral strength to "do the right thing" and therefore the punishing of this failure, no matter how serious the consequences, is seen as moral. The function of the abstract noun "commitment" in this example is also of interest. It is this which carries the agency of delivering the sanctions mentioned. In this way, Duncan Smith avoids overtly assigning the disciplinarian role to any person, while foregrounding the evaluatively positive "commitment". As severe as the sanctions may be then, they appear to come from a positive place.

5.6 Citizens as Children within the Family Model

I have argued that the government is conceptualised as occupying the parental role within a system based on a model of family morality. Furthermore, I have endeavoured in this chapter, to show that the conceptual metaphors and vocabulary used in this dataset, even given the presence of some which appear superficially to be of a more liberal nature, demonstrate that their user, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, is speaking from a Strict Father framework. Having established that the government occupies this parental role, the focus then turns to the role of citizens. How does the father view his children, and how is this view linguistically constructed in the dataset?

5.6.1 The Constructed Opposition of Taxpayers and Benefits Claimants

I suggest that the citizens of the UK are presented in these speeches as belonging to two distinct, mutually exclusive groups: taxpayers and benefits claimants. Within the category of “taxpayer” there is a third, elite group called “wealth creators”, and this refers to the capitalist class: the employers who, as we saw above, are described as being at “the top of society”. The implication here is that these are the “best” citizens, father’s favourites, perhaps. This may be why this elite group of taxpayers enjoys tax cuts not known to the other members of that group, by way of reward for their hard work and financial success. The top tax rate was reduced further in April of 2013, resulting in the fact that “hundreds of millionaires working in Britain's banks will save an average of almost £54,000...according to figures compiled by the Labour party. The changes mean that 643 bankers, each earning more than £1m, could get a combined tax cut worth at least £34.6m” (Guardian online 05.03.13)

“...this is about fairness in the same way as ensuring that we get rid of the jobs tax so that employers are not penalised for giving people a chance to get back to work.” (Appendix 1: 145-146)

What is referred to here as “the jobs tax” is a form of graduated tax which, in a Nurturant Parent model, represents the fairness of scalar distribution: the more you make, the more you can contribute.

However, from a Strict Father viewpoint, this amounts to penalising employers for “creating wealth” by growing their business, and is felt to be fundamentally unfair for that reason. This is why, for this government looking at it in this way, through a Strict Father’s eyes, “getting rid of” that tax was the obviously fair thing to do.

In this dataset, “citizens” occurs nine times. In referring to members of the first group, “taxpayer(s)” occurs 27 times and “wealth creator(s)” 10 times. With reference to those in the second group, “claimant(s)” occurs 26 times; “jobseekers” 3 times, and “recipient(s)” and “those receiving” appear twice each. These are all forms of actionymic referencing in which people are being referred to in terms of what they *do*, importantly, in relation to the economy. This referencing technique is a means of effecting what Hart calls a de-spatialisation strategy. “De-spatialisation strategies define coalitional groups in terms of physical, that is, geographical, or metaphorical space. These strategies are referred to as “*de-spatialisation* strategies because members of the out-group are categorised as being from a different place or space to the in-group; they are ‘displaced’” (Hart 2010: 57)

We have already seen that citizens are depicted as occupying a different metaphorical space, in that there are those at the top and those at the bottom. The demarcation is along economic lines and yet the suggestion is that the difference between these citizens is one of *values*, namely of work ethic. The economic status of these two groups of citizens are depicted as being mutually exclusive to each other,

in another instance of what I have called temporal exclusion. The language and syntax of their description have the effect of suggesting that one cannot occupy both metaphorical positions, or states of being, simultaneously. Throughout the dataset, the state of being “in work” is presented as being clearly distinct from the state of being “on benefits”:

- “putting clear incentives in place to get people back (into **work**) and (off **benefits**) altogether.” (Appendix 1: 187-188)
- “We will reform the regime so that we properly reward the providers who do best at creating sustainable jobs that help people move (out of **benefits**) and (into **work**).” (*ibid*: 132-134)
- “...a system that encourages people to move (into **work**) and (out of **benefits**)” (*ibid*: 622-623)

As we saw earlier in the thesis, the use of parallel grammatical structures triggers comparison in the mind of the text-consumer which leads to the construction of equation or opposition between the concepts expressed by those structures.

“All of the coordinating conjunctions seem to be available as indicators of opposition...”

(Jeffries 2010: 42)

“...Although *and* is not so predictably a sign of opposition, it does occur in some examples, usually alongside other triggers and/ or a more clearly ‘semantic’ opposition as indicated by the choice of vocabulary or the general semantic context” (*ibid*: 44)

Although “and” is the coordinating conjunction in all of the above examples, I feel that the constructed opposition is aided by the semantically contrastive qualities of the prepositional phrases it links. The dynamic nature of the prepositions and complex prepositions functioning as head of these phrases creates a sense of *movement* from one state of being into the other. One could easily add the adverbial

conjunction “then” here (“and then”) without altering the sense of the utterance. This would highlight how the constructed exclusivity is achieved by a sense of temporal exclusion. The implication is that these states of being are complementary to, or mutually exclusive of, each other. As was mentioned in chapter 4, section 4.3.8, 93% of new applications for Housing Benefit came from households where at least one person works. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, publically announced in January 2013 that he would be ceasing to claim Child Benefit, illustrating that benefits are indeed claimed by many people who are in work. However, a huge number of these people, unlike the Chancellor, could not survive without them. We have seen too, in chapter 4, the tendency to emphasise the *physical* distance between these groups of people, by terms such as “**pockets** of worklessness” and “workless **blackspots**” and the striking imagery evoked by such statements as “where worklessness is **endemic**” and “**containment** is no longer an option”, which draws on a rather alarming image-schema of disease and implies that the negative values of the people in these geographical “pockets” may be contagious, that the government or previous governments had been intentionally keeping them “contained” for that reason but is no longer able to do so. This then serves to convince those in danger of “infection” that something must be done urgently, which in turn could be seen to support the swingeing cuts to the welfare bill.

5.7 Conclusions

It has been the aim of this chapter to demonstrate that, despite the presence of language which may appear, at first, to come from a more liberal or Nurturant Parent framework, the central metaphors used throughout are very much those central to the Strict Father model, focussing on main research questions 1,2 and 3.

- 1) What political ideologies are present and on what conceptual metaphor systems are these political ideologies based?

This has been explored in some detail in this chapter, where it was argued that the underlying ideology in these speeches is that which Lakoff calls the Strict Father worldview, with MORALITY IS STRENGTH as its central metaphor. The other metaphors in the system were also described and demonstrated.

- 2) What are the advantages and dangers of widespread acceptance of these metaphor systems?

A shared metaphorical understanding, especially of complex political ideas, can be advantageous as it provides common ground upon which language users can meet and discuss a range of concepts. As this and previous chapters have demonstrated, danger can arise when the familiarity of conceptual metaphors is exploited to lead to erroneous conclusions and to disguise the complexity of real-life situations.

- 3) How are these metaphors and underlying ideologies realised through the vocabulary, grammar and syntax of these political speeches?

This chapter has sought to describe these in detail. It has relied heavily on Lakoff's (1996) framework for political metaphor theory and drawn on Jeffries' (2010) framework for constructed opposition and equation. To a lesser extent it has used Simpson's (1993) framework for transitivity to demonstrate the roles played by terms deemed significant to these metaphor systems. It has aimed to show that the liberal language used in the dataset is itself a rhetorical device designed to appeal to those who would be most inclined to disagree with the Welfare Reform Act. Duncan Smith makes selective mention of social reformers with whom those same potential critics are likely to identify, in order to imply that the

reforms his party are implementing are in line with what these influential figures believed. The chapter has gone on to outline the ways in which a strong belief in both folk behaviourism and the centrality of the MORALITY IS STRENGTH metaphor are evident throughout these speeches and that the typical liberal responses to the problems he claims will be addressed by the legislative reforms in question simply do not appear in the dataset. In describing these cuts as his only choice, the speaker is exploiting the tendency to conceptualise a nation as a family and, consequently, the national budget as that of a household. Furthermore, it is his adherence to a Strict Father moral framework which makes welfare the most obvious place from which cuts should be made as, as he depicts it, many of the people relying on this are doing so unnecessarily.

Chapter 6

Thesis Conclusions

This thesis has been an analysis of the linguistic construction of present-day Britain in the speeches of Iain Duncan Smith. It is a construction of Britain which seeks to explain and justify the legislative reforms contained within the Welfare Reform Act 2012. In chapter 3, the focus was on main research question 1 (“What political ideologies are present and on what conceptual metaphor systems are these political ideologies based?”), but also addressed questions 3 and 4 (3 “How are these metaphors and underlying ideologies realised through the vocabulary, grammar and syntax of these political speeches?” 4 “Ultimately, what is the potential for the language used in these speeches to influence what UK citizens will allow, or even encourage to happen to the welfare state?”). We saw here that austerity itself is presented as being the only option available to government in terms of tackling the financial crisis which began in 2008. This claim relies upon people’s conceptualisation of the nation as a family and of the

Page | 133

national budget as a household budget. The welfare budget itself has been depicted as growing not only at an alarming rate, but in unpredictable directions. The metaphors used to describe the welfare budget - and system - construct the picture of a dangerous force which must be stopped, by means of radical reforms to the welfare state. Using the words of the welfare state's architect, Sir William Beveridge, Duncan Smith presents a situation in which the idea that citizens have failed to understand their responsibilities in maintaining it is foregrounded, and the failings on the part of the government are backgrounded. He highlights repeatedly that Beveridge had said there was a danger of men "settling down to" a life on benefits but at no point mentions that he also said the welfare state required "a state of society in which there was opportunity of work for all and at an adequate wage". In a society where in 2012, there were an average of 18 applications for every available job and where 93% of new applications for Housing Benefit came from people who are already employed, any failings on the part of the labour market have been consistently backgrounded to protect it from criticism, in favour of foregrounding the alleged lack of "understanding the intrinsic benefits of work" by citizens (Appendix 1: 4435; 5412; 5337; 5939). This strategy supports what was examined in chapter 4 - the construction of "worklessness" as a cultural rather than economic problem. Citizens themselves are referred to by actionymic referencing terms, a realisation of de-spatialisation strategy which serves to "displace" them and underscore the physical and metaphorical distance between them. They are depicted as belonging to two distinct groups: taxpayers and benefits claimants, and I have shown how these two states of being are presented as being temporally mutually exclusive of each other: one may occupy one *and then* the other, but not both simultaneously. In reality, this is not the case and many people belong to both groups for prolonged periods of time. Chapter 4 addressed main research questions 2, 3 and 4 in detail. (2 "What are the advantages and dangers of widespread acceptance of these metaphor systems?" 3 "How are these metaphors and underlying ideologies realised through the vocabulary, grammar and

syntax of these political speeches?” 4 “Ultimately, what is the potential for the language used in these speeches to influence what UK citizens will allow, or even encourage to happen to the welfare state?”)

In chapter 5 it was argued that the speeches were presented from a fundamentally right-wing ideological standpoint, and the underlying metaphors of this were examined, addressing main research question 1 (What political ideologies are present and on what conceptual metaphor systems are these political ideologies based?) in detail, but also addressing questions 2 and 3 (2 “What are the advantages and dangers of widespread acceptance of these metaphor systems?”; 3 “How are these metaphors and underlying ideologies realised through the vocabulary, grammar and syntax of these political speeches?”).

To address research question 4 again, the overall effect of these strategies is to direct blame, and to encourage the speeches’ audiences to direct blame for the alleged need for swingeing cuts, toward the very people who will suffer under them, suggesting that most of them do not really need the help they have been receiving but have been accepting it through laziness or other moral weakness. In the Strict Father’s eyes, the hardship they are about to endure will spur them on to become morally stronger and self-reliant.

Chapter 7

Future Directions

The work in this thesis has uncovered a number of the social, cognitive and linguistic strategies and effects of the political speeches made by this one British politician. I will expand on this foundation in future work, and examine more closely the conceptual metaphors behind the driving political ideologies of legislative reforms. I will look at the speeches of other politicians, from the same and also opposing political ideological backgrounds in order to carry out a comparison of the vocabulary, grammar and syntax used, as well as their central conceptual metaphors. Furthermore, I believe a study of contemporary media reports will prove revealing, in terms of the extent to which the ideas propagated in the political domain are being reflected in public life. Some interesting questions will arise, I believe, about the directionality and depth of mutual influence between the two domains. This further study will also provide me with an opportunity to raise awareness in my own community, of the ideological roots of political arguments and the linguistic strategies used to present them as commonsense, to better equip people with the tools to recognise such methods and to be aware of possible counterarguments to claims such as those put forward in this dataset and in the wider political sphere.

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